Commentary

Volume Seventy-eight, Number Five, November 1984

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Books in Review: Samuel McCracken/Ruth R. Wisse/Guenter Lewy/ Daniel Pipes/Edward Pearce/James Ring Adams

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Commentary

VOLUME 78 NUMBER FIVE *NOVEMBER 1984*

Articles

19 The Case Against Arms Control *Seymour Weiss*

24 "Peace for Galilee": Success or Failure? *Eliot A. Cohen*

31 Infanticide & Its Apologists *Mary Tedeschi*

36 A Taste for Dostoevsky *Lionel Abel*

42 Economics in Decline *Melville J. Ulmer*

47 What Hubert Humphrey Wrought *Nelson W. Polsby*

Story

51 The Stranger *Yehoshua Bar Yosef*

Letters

2 from *Eugene J. Fisher, Norman Ravitch, Alan Mittleman, James Scott Bell, R.A. Morey, Hyam Maccoby, Joseph R. Aziz, David Broyles, Sidney Hook, Dan Cordtz, Paul H. Weaver, Paul A. Gigot, Herb Greer, Jean-François Revel, Steven L. Cantor, Kenneth S. Lynn,* and others

Books in Review

60 The Apocalyptics: Cancer and the Big Lie, by Edith Efron *Samuel McCracken*

62 The Nightmare of Reason: A Life of Franz Kafka, by Ernst Pawel *Ruth R. Wisse*

65 The Quality of Mercy: Cambodia, Holocaust, and Modern Conscience, by William Shawcross *Guenter Lewy*

67 The PLO, by Jillian Becker *Daniel Pipes*

69 Hilaire Belloc, by A.N. Wilson *Edward Pearce*

71 Cities and the Wealth of Nations, by Jane Jacobs *James Ring Adams*

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Letters from Readers

Christianity & Judaism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hyam Maccoby begins his article, "Christianity's Break With Judaism" [August], with a question: "Which is the true continuation of the ancient Israelite religion—the Christian Church or the Jewish synagogue?" From the Roman Catholic side, it can be said that there is an answer to this question, though the answer will no doubt not satisfy Mr. Maccoby's penchant for "either/or" solutions to complex realities.

That answer, quite simply, is that both the Church and the Jewish people are true continuations of biblical Israel. One can see this response quite clearly and definitively in the whole line of official Church teaching (statements of local hierarchies, of the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations With the Jews, and of the Popes themselves). For example, Pope John Paul II addressed the Jewish community of Mainz in November 1980 as representatives of "the people of God of the old covenant never revoked by God."

I would argue that this sense of acknowledgment of the validity of the Jewish religion has always been preserved (albeit in remarkably obscure fashion in certain tragic periods) in the teaching of the Church. Thus, throughout the Middle Ages it was an excommunicable offense to disrupt Jewish worship services. This heaviest penalty of the Church was not applied regarding any other religion, marking a clear distinction in the minds of the Catholic authorities.

The acknowledgment also can be seen ironically in the rather curious notion that arose during the period of the Inquisition that the Talmud could be denounced as "heretical." Jeremy Cohen's *The Friars and the Jews: The Evolution of Medieval Anti-Judaism* (Cornell University Press, 1983) shows how this period saw the establishment of a new pernicious stage in the development of the ideology of the ancient "teaching of contempt" against Jews and Judaism. The irony is that unless there was an underlying acknowledgment of the rabbinic literature as indeed in continuity with biblical Israel, there would have been no way to justify a charge of "heresy." Only God's people can commit heresy, properly so called.

Mr. Maccoby's treatment of St. Paul, I believe, tends to confuse Paul's arguments and conclusions with those of Marcion, who took exactly the gnostic, dualistic stance Mr. Maccoby erroneously imputes to "Pauline Christianity." A more careful reading of the Pauline literature in the light of contemporary scholarship such as E.P. Sanders's more recent *Paul, the Law, and the Jewish People* (Fortress, 1983), Krister Stendahl's *Paul Among the Jews and Gentiles* (Fortress, 1976), Daniel Harrington's *God's People in Christ: New Testament Perspectives on the Church and Judaism* (Fortress, 1980), and John G. Gager's *The Origins of Anti-Semitism: Attitudes Toward Judaism in Pagan and Christian Antiquity* (Oxford University Press, 1983) might help to clarify for Mr. Maccoby what the issues were that Paul faced, and therefore what he was actually trying to say.

Christianity did indeed grapple with gnostic dualism in its early period, but did condemn it (finally) as it did Marcion. The *Nag Hammadi* texts were lost for centuries in the desert precisely because what emerged as orthodox Christianity condemned them. Mr. Maccoby, it appears to me, glosses over much of that complex history and interaction in his simple equation of Christianity with gnosticism.

It is, of course, very true to say that the Church's evolved understanding of Jesus is what distinguishes it from Judaism, just as appreciation for Jesus' humanity will always bind Christians to Jews, as unsettling as that reality may be for some members of both communities.

Likewise, it may be that certain elements of the mystery-cults of the period were adapted by Christianity in the search for a way to articulate the meaning of the Christ-event. I remain unconvinced of this at this point. But even if the notion proves to be valid, the Christian community had good biblical precedent for adapting with key modifications themes and images taken from the pagan world around it. The first chapter of Genesis does just that with the Babylonian creation myths. One must look in both cases at the crucial distinctions being made. Christianity proclaims the One God, the God of Israel, not two gods as Mr. Maccoby would seemingly have us believe. And the

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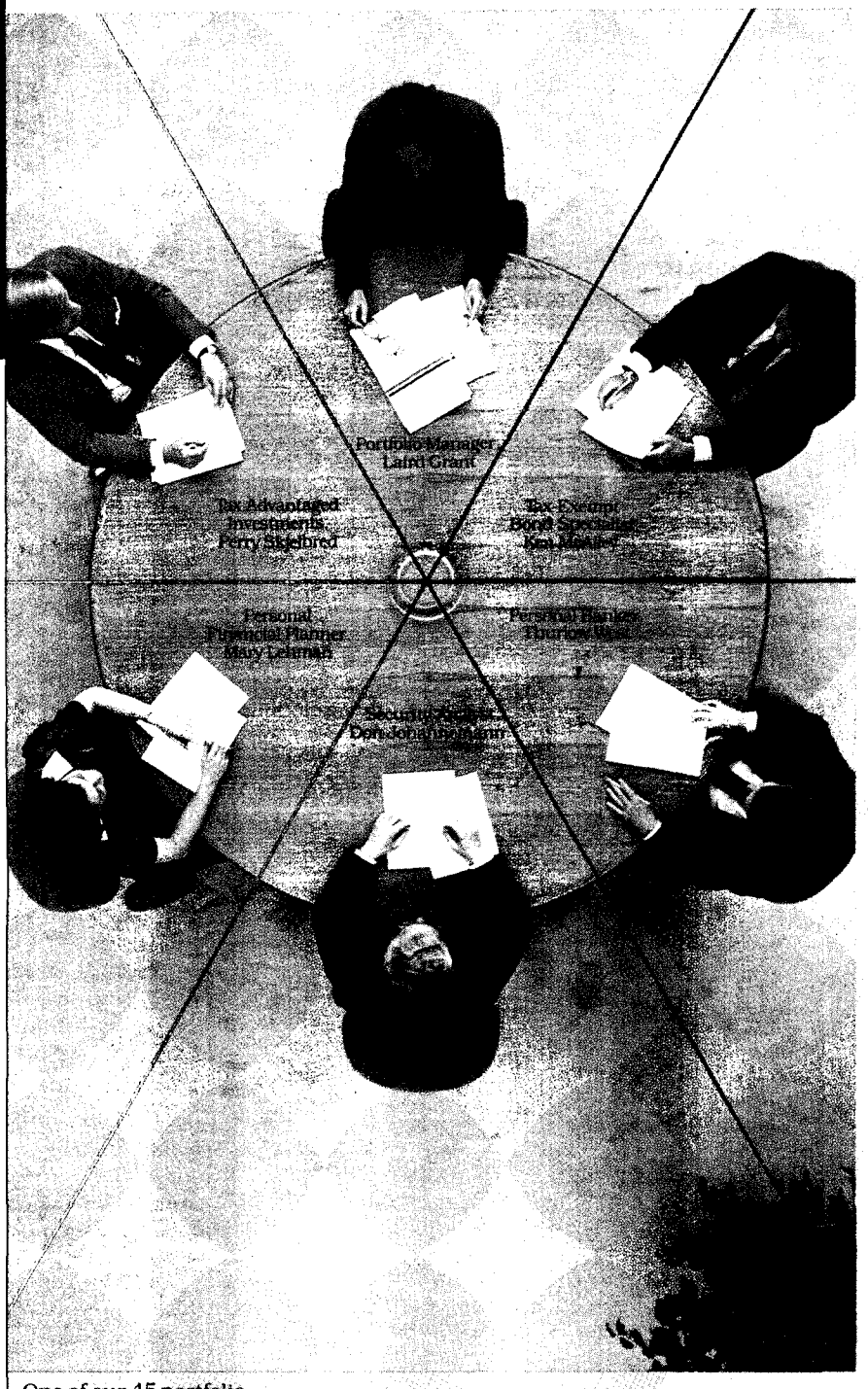

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note of "despair" that Mr. Maccoby addresses is wholly alien to the Catholic tradition as I understand it.

EUGENE J. FISHER
Executive Secretary, Secretariat
for Catholic-Jewish Relations
National Conference of Catholic
Bishops
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hyam Maccoby's "Christianity's Break With Judaism" is consistent with his other scholarship: he combines learning and imagination with a polemical lack of moderation and balance. At least he is always interesting.

It is certainly true, as Mr. Maccoby claims, that early Christianity was influenced by gnostic dualism; indeed, Christianity has always had to fight to avoid extreme gnostic conclusions about the Jews and the Old Testament. But it has, at every crucial turn, turned against the gnostic abandonment of the Jewish heritage. Mr. Maccoby is certainly wrong in saying that "both gnosticism and Christianity identified the Jews as the earthly representatives of the power of Darkness." Even the Fourth Gospel, as it seems to ascribe diabolical designs to the Jews, maintains that "salvation is of the Jews." Christians have been tempted to believe the worst about the Jews, but they finally have had no choice but to reject the temptation. Alas, not always promptly.

Mr. Maccoby is correct in seeing Paul of Tarsus as an innovator. However, he fails to ask an important question: what was Paul's main preoccupation? It seems to have been how to bring the millions of Gentiles to a saving knowledge of God. This concern was certainly Jewish in the best sense, and one which a certain Jewish ethnocentrism finally succeeded in purging from Judaism. It is interesting that a Jewish novelist, Sholem Asch in *The Apostle*, brought Paul the Jew to life better than many biblical scholars of whatever persuasion. Mr. Maccoby could do worse than absorb a little of Asch's charity and wisdom.

NORMAN RAVITCH
University of California
Riverside, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hyam Maccoby argues that there is a phenomenological chasm yawning between 1st-century Judaism and Christianity such that any attempt to read Christianity as "just another Jewish sect" must founder on the very different logics of the two religious patterns. Interpreting E.P. Sanders, he is convinced that Christianity's pattern is a soteriology embodying mystery-cult elements, while Judaism—in all of its manifestations—remains a covenantal nomism. The latter pattern implies that, for the Jew, the primacy of the issue of salvation is deferred owing to the fact that the Jew participates in the covenant. His conclusion, that the Jewish-Christian conflict cannot be smoothed away by a categorical reduction to a family quarrel, is presumably intended to defuse the revisionist enthusiasm of historians, theologians, and perhaps those involved in Jewish-Christian relations who follow the lead of the scholars.

It is, at the outset, odd that anyone would imagine that so terrible and complex a conflict could be "smoothed away" by new perspectives on Christian origins. The conflict does not lack for sources outside 1st-century Palestine. Even if early Christianity could be read in its entirety as a Jewish sect, a whole history from Nicaea to Martin Luther intervenes. Whatever degree of distance-making one might wish to attribute to Paul pales in comparison to the estrangement effected by those other factors that have so exacerbated the Jewish-Christian conflict. Who would be so naive as to hope that any amount of revisioning could "smooth away" millennial antagonisms? Surely not anyone involved in Jewish-Christian relations. As important as correct historiography is, after a certain point it neither profits nor saves. A positive relation between Jews and Christians must be built upon a moral reality other than the imagined comportment of our ancestors toward one another.

To the extent that there is profit in history, however, one ought to attend to those scholars who emphasize the "family resemblance" of Judaism and Christianity, for certain obvious and important facts have been obscured by centuries of tendentious theology. The early Christians read the Hebrew Scriptures, prayed in the language of the Psalms, and believed that they were worshipping the God of Israel. They proclaimed a certain rabbi as their messiah and interpreted his career through the lens of Midrash and Targum. Mr. Maccoby leaves all the points of contact out of account. He renders common elements categorically irrelevant by the use of a simple stratagem: Christianity is equated with Pauline Christianity (and what of Petrine or Johannine faith?) and Paul is dismissed as an anti-Jewish Hellenist.

If one wishes to sidestep the mounting body of scholarship that explores Paul's continuity with Pharisaism and to assert, with Sanders, that Paul's view lies outside Judaism's "covenantal nomism," then one should at least do so for the right reasons. Sanders holds that Paul was so convinced that God did an astonishing new thing in Jesus that he could not help believing that the law was henceforth subordinate in importance to the Christ-experience. Paul reasoned inductively from the new fact of Jesus to a change in status of the old fact of the law. He did not—as the traditional picture and Mr. Maccoby would have it—despair of the law and find his long-standing *Angst* resolved in Jesus. Sanders takes issue precisely with this psychological or existential *Weltschmerz* version of Paul, yet this is Mr. Maccoby's Paul and consequently his Christianity.

Once Christianity has become essentially a mystery-flight from despair, it is easy to contrast it in absolute terms to a world-affirming, activist Judaism. It is especially easy since it has been done often enough before. Schopenhauer had done so as a proponent of despair, and Leo Baeck did so in the name of "classical religion." While such typologies may make prominent certain aspects of a tradition, they distort the form of the whole. Schopenhauer's "Jewish optimism" and Baeck's "romantic Christianity" point out propensities and dimensions of a religion, but if mistaken for the religion *in toto*, they lose both scholarly and moral credibility. So too with Mr. Maccoby's Christianity. Shorn of all traces of biblical and Jewish religion, his Christianity is reduced to a caricature and a foil, suitable perhaps for Marcion or the "*Deutsche Christen*" but for no one who is "spiritually a Semite."

Tripping down the slippery slope of Mr. Maccoby's reductionism, one could easily forget that although the Church rejected the Judaizers, it also rejected the gnostics. In doing so, the Church committed itself to a career of moral

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seriousness in this world. Participation in the Christ-experience was never intended as only a saving mystery but, as the lives of countless Christians have demonstrated, as a calling to active discipleship. It was one of these Christians, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who warned against Mr. Maccoby's distortion of Christianity. He called it "cheap grace": salvation without responsibility. If Jews and Christians could discover a family resemblance in their ways of being responsible, in the *imitatio Christi* of the one and the *kiddush ha-Shem* of the other, then the conflict, while not "smoothed away," would give way to a creditable coexistence.

[Rabbi] ALAN MITTLEMAN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hyam Maccoby scores some well-deserved points against the *Tendenz* of Chrstian scholarship on Jewish post-canonical writings. The attempt to "disinherit" Judaism by showing that only Christianity stands in the living tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures has long distorted Christianity's historiography, and it does not lack continuators in the present day.

Doubly disappointing, therefore, is the realization that Mr. Maccoby intends not to reject, but only to reverse, the strategy of the disinheritance. Arguing that official (i.e., Pauline) Christianity is a blend of immanentistic mystery-cults and dualistic gnosticism, he pronounces the split between the Jewish Scriptures and Christianity unbridgeable. In his attempt to substantiate this verdict, moreover, Mr. Maccoby indulges in some historiographical distortions of his own. I choose a few examples from pivotal points in his argument: the assertion that "The New Testament tells us about the death of a god who was resurrected on the third day"; that "it substituted an irreversible rebirth into innocence for the continual moral struggle, guided by the Torah, which for Jews gave life its significance"; that "Both gnosticism and Christianity are radically dualistic systems, seeing this world as captured by the power of Darkness in the course of its war against the power of Light."

A minimal acquaintance with the literature of the New Testament and early Christianity should suffice to show that these claims are insupportable. Christianity did indeed propose a more despairing diagnosis of the human condition, and a more radical cure, than did rabbinic Judaism; it has not been immune to dualistic developments, and many of these, from Marcion to Chamberlain, have taken on an anti-Jewish or even anti-Semitic character. Yet these gnostic versions of Christianity do not represent the mainstream, which even at its most "Pauline" has struggled (with varying degrees of success) to incorporate the nomistic and prophetic heritage of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The Jewish critique of Christian otherworldliness, carried forward in our day with such insight, vigor, and courtesy by Leo Baeck and Martin Buber, is too valuable—for Christianity and hence for the culture within which Jews and Christians must live together—to be put at risk through Mr. Maccoby's careless foreclosure on the Jewish-Christian relationship.

DAVID E. TIMMER
Central College
Pella, Iowa

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hyam Maccoby's article is an interesting but unpersuasive attempt to find an unfordable schism between Christianity and Judaism. His central thesis—that Christianity manifests a "despair" that is foreign to the Hebrew Bible—is simply theologically incorrect, and thus the entire argument falls along with its foundation.

Mr. Maccoby attempts to attach the despair of extreme gnosticism to Christianity. This is a tenuous scholarly endeavor at best, and simply eviscerates the historical record. The crux of his position seems to be that the Hebraic view sees the world as basically "good" because it is created by God. This is contrasted with Christianity's view that man's condition has somehow gone "wrong," requiring divine action to set things right.

There is really not much—or rather too much—to say to this. Is the account of the Fall the story of man's autonomous possibilities? Is the covenant with Abraham a

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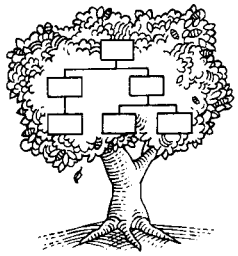

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promise to let man go it alone? Is there nothing to be learned from the history of apostasy and restoration (on God's initiative) of the Jews? Mr. Maccoby seems strangely unaware of the message (and apocalypticism) of the Prophets, which usually follows a pattern of announcing judgment and promising a day of salvation based not on merit but, again, on covenant. The central theme of Judaism and Christianity is, undeniably, the same: radical monotheism. Man needs God and God is there for man. That the biblical clarity of this message is so often obscured demonstrates, ironically, the very "despairing" condition of man that Mr. Maccoby seeks to deny. . . .

JAMES SCOTT BELL
Woodland Hills, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . In his article, Hyam Maccoby resurrects a theory originally developed by W. Wrede in 1904 in his book, *Paulus*. Wrede stated that Paul was the true founder of Christianity and that Paul's religion was not the religion of Jesus. This was further developed by Bruckner in 1908. In his *Der Sterbe und Auferstehende Gottheiland* he claimed that Paul got Christianity from the Greek mystery-cults. This was repeated again by Bousset in his *Kyrious Christos* in 1913. It was fully answered by the great Princeton scholar Gresham Machen in his *Origin of Paul's Religion* in 1925. The Dutch scholar H. Ridderbos brought the debate up to date once again in 1958 in his *Paul and Jesus*. The facts are as follows:

1. The historicity of Jesus and his apostles cannot be denied.
2. A wedge cannot arbitrarily be driven between Paul and Jesus.
3. Christianity is the religion founded by Jesus and expounded by the apostles (Paul included).
4. Christianity cannot be reduced to Jewish apocalypticism. The attempt to identify the New Testament concept of the person and work of Jesus with various intertestamental movements or literature has borne no fruit whatsoever. Jesus did not fit the picture of the messiah who was expected to come.
5. Christianity cannot be reduced to the Greek mystery-religions. There is no evidence that the mystery-religions existed before the appearance of Christianity. None of them had the concept of a substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection that is found in the New Testament. Further research since 1908 has demonstrated that the attempt to identify the annual fall (death) and spring (resurrection) festivals of pagan fertility gods such as Osiris, Attis, etc. with the New Testament concept of the person and work of Jesus can no longer be viewed as valid.

What is our response to E.P. Sanders and Hyam Maccoby? They merely repeat the old arguments from 1908. They do not give any evidence of having read Machen's classic work on the subject or of knowing any of the major works that contradict their theory.... The reliability of statements in the Gospels depends entirely on whether or not they "fit" into their preconceived notions.

After looking at all the options, we can only conclude that no one has clearly established any historical source for Christianity. We should admit that some of its concepts are unique and that they cannot be reduced to anything in the Hebrew or Hellenistic world. Certainly we should not neglect to examine the passages from the law and Prophets which Jesus and the apostles interpreted in the New Testament. Neither can we neglect the existential impact of the visions which the apostles claimed to receive from God. These visions revealed *new* things to them. Peter's vision concerning the Gentiles (Acts 10) and the revelations which Paul claimed to receive from the heavenly Jesus (Galatians 1) give promise of fruitful study in the future. . . .

R. A. MOREY
Shermansdale, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Hyam Maccoby asserts that "When Christianity adopted the standpoint of gnosticism and the mystery-cults, it made a decisive break with Judaism."

Regarding gnosticism, Christianity rose up to cast out this heresy very early in its history through the promulgation of the "Apostles' Creed." This most fundamental statement of Christian faith is best understood as a refutation of gnosticism, first inasmuch as it affirms belief in "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." That is, it repudiates the gnostic idea that the created world is evil or the work of an evil god. Orthodox Christianity affirms that the material world is good and worthy to be used and enjoyed by man.

The Creed next affirms belief in "Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary." . . . This phrase, together with ones concerning suffering, death, and burial, was the Church's method, contrary to the gnostic position, of asserting its belief in the complete humanity of Jesus.

The phrase of the Creed concerning "the resurrection of the body" must also be understood in this light. This phrase was a method of affirming the Jewish faith that man is whole; he is not divided, as gnostics and many Greek philosophers believed, into a good soul and an evil body. The gnostic doctrine of the immortality of the soul is based on this belief, and implies that the soul is naturally immortal and only needs to be freed from the flesh. This also implies that the body is at best a burden and at worst an obstacle to the salvation of the soul. Orthodox Christianity denied this, affirming the value of the body and thereby the importance and value of this earthly life.

As for Mr. Maccoby's notion that Christianity "introduces ideas taken from the mystery-cults" in its teachings on the resurrection, two points. First, every religion has had to deal with the concept of atonement. . . . In contrast to other religions, Christianity has a unique point of view. Whereas most religions believe that man has to do something to atone before God, Christianity teaches that God Himself has performed the atoning work in and through Jesus.

Second, Mr. Maccoby, referring apparently to Paul's teaching in his letter to the Romans, interprets Jesus' sacrifice as substituting "an irreversible rebirth into innocence for the continual moral struggle, guided by the Torah, which for Jews gave life its significance." However, far from suggesting that the law is "irrelevant and inadequate," as Mr. Maccoby suggests, a fair reading of Paul indicates that he viewed the risen Jesus as the fulfillment of the law: "Do we overthrow the law by this faith? By no means! On the contrary we uphold the law" (Romans 3:31). . . .

In contrasting Christianity with Judaism, it was incumbent upon Mr. Maccoby to present orthodox Christian doctrine rather than his somewhat idiosyncratic interpretations. In doing otherwise, he fails to do justice to either tradition.

ROGER ANDERSON
Charlottesville, Virginia

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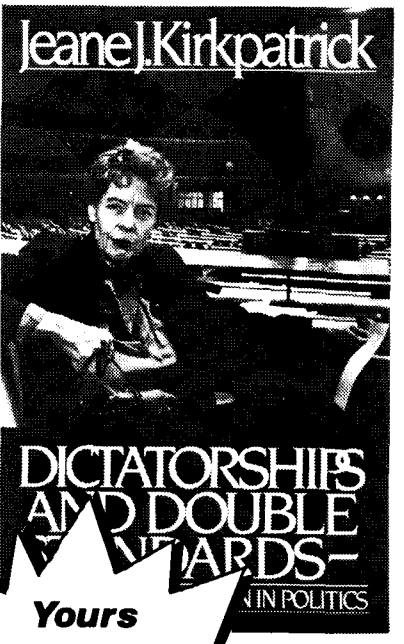

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HYAM MACCOBY writes:

All the correspondents are much concerned about Jewish-Christian friendship. Quite rightly so; and I wish to make it clear that I am just as concerned as they are; and am, in fact, actively involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue. I disagree, however, with the correspondents' approach. I think that the idealization of the past is counterproductive. At this moment of Christian good will in certain influential circles, it is vital, in order to transfer this new attitude to the masses, to discover exactly what and how much went wrong; otherwise, the moment will pass before we know what it was in the Christian heritage that produced anti-Semitism—a knowledge that is essential for the development of effective educational programs in the future.

An example of the idealization of the past is Eugene J. Fisher's assertion that the Roman Catholic Church has always taken the view that "both the Church and the Jewish people are true continuations of biblical Israel." In fact, Judaism, as a living, continuing religion incorporating the Mishnah, Talmud, and later developments, was never accepted by the Roman Catholic Church. When the Talmud was denounced as "heretical," this was on the ground that Jews were permitted to profess only the Old Testament, not any subsequent expressions of their religion. For a full treatment of this topic, I refer Mr. Fisher to my *Judaism on Trial* (Associated University Presses, 1982), pp. 19-38. I conclude there that "Christians were prepared to tolerate Judaism only as long as it remained fixated in pre-Christian Judaism; i.e., if it remained as a fossilized witness to the kind of Judaism which Jesus came to supersede." Eugene J. Fisher projects his own admirably tolerant attitudes back into the Church of ancient and medieval times.

Mr. Fisher also objects to my characterization of Christianity as akin to gnosticism, on the ground that the gnostic Marcion and other gnostics were rejected by the Church. Similar objections are made by most of the other correspondents. This, however, is to ignore the fact that there were many varieties of gnosticism, some more extreme than others, and that these different varieties were often in conflict with one another. The most extreme forms regarded the creator of the earth as evil; Christianity, less extreme, regarded the earth as having come under the rule of an evil power, Satan, who was not the creator, but the "prince of this world" (John 12:31, etc.). The great expansion of the role of Satan found in Christianity amounted, nevertheless, to a considerable dualism. Christianity may be defined as a form of gnosticism that was enabled to survive by its compromise with the demands of law and organization, but which always remained gnostic at heart.

As for the gnostic affinities of Paul, I assure Mr. Fisher that I am fully aware of the views of E.P. Sanders, Krister Stendahl, Daniel Harrington, and John G. Gager, and, while I cannot explore the matter fully here (I have done so in a book, *Paul*, to be published shortly in England by Weidenfeld), I would say this: the present amiable consensus absolving Paul of anti-Judaism and gnosticism has glossed over a great many contrary indications in the texts, and has the character of a wish-fulfillment. Paul was a radical antinomian in theory, who, like many antinomians, found that he had to compromise with reality and reluctantly allow law to creep back. This does not make him less of a gnostic; other gnostics too (the Valentinians, for example) faced the same dilemma in a similar way, preserving a core of pure gnosticism in an outward shell of organization.

Another question raised both by Eugene J. Fisher and by other correspondents (Roger Anderson, R.A. Morey) is that of the links between Christianity and the mystery-cults. Mr. Fisher says that Christianity *may* have adapted the mystery-cult myths, but Judaism also adapted pagan myths, e.g., the Babylonian creation myth. I am surprised at this argument. The Babylonian myth was utterly transformed in Judaism (instead of mankind being formed from the body of a sinful and rebellious god, and thus being doomed to cringing expiation from the start, mankind is created freely by God and given "dominion" over the earth). In Christianity, however, the death-and-resurrection myth performs precisely the same psychological function as in the mystery-cults, i.e., "salvation" from a hopeless human condition. If, as Mr. Fisher asserts, there is no note of "despair" in Christianity, what is the need for a cosmic sacrifice, and why is there such a desperate need for salvation?

According to R.A. Morey, however, "there is no evidence that the mystery-religions existed before the existence of Christianity." There cannot really be any doubt that the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries, for example, preceded Christianity, whatever the date of the surviving writings describing these forms of worship. Mr. Morey, however, denies that such mystery-cults had the concept of substitutionary atonement and bodily resurrection. "Substitutionary atonement," so far from being unique to Christianity or even the mystery-cults, is prehistoric in origin, being one of the basic ideas behind all sacrifice, and particularly human sacrifice. "Bodily resurrection," I agree, was not a mystery-religion doctrine. It was derived from Judaism, and Jesus' earliest disciples believed it in the Pharisaic manner, and simply thought that Jesus had experienced it in advance of the rest of mankind without thereby becoming divine. In Paul's hands, however, the doctrine became "spiritualized" in a mystery-cult manner: he interpreted the new "body" acquired at resurrection as a "spiritual body" (I Corinthians 15), and Jesus' resurrection as a deification.

James Scott Bell differs from the other correspondents in doubting my "optimistic" picture of Judaism, rather than my "pessimistic" picture of Christianity. Again, he simplifies my view. I do not say that Judaism is a rosy optimism that sees no bar to man's self-fulfillment. I do say that Judaism sees a solution in terms of the initiative of man, despite all the huge difficulties, and with the help of God-given instruction in the Torah. The gulf between this attitude and that of believing that "God Himself has performed the atoning work in and through Jesus" (Roger Anderson, above) is radical. The staringly obvious fact that Judaism requires no cosmic sacrifice to make life viable apparently escapes the attention of Mr. Bell, as of the other correspondents.

Rabbi Mittleman's letter veers so many ways that it is hard to find a clear line of argument. He grants that there has been a "terrible conflict" between Judaism and Christianity in both the ancient and the medieval world, and asks how anyone could hope to

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smooth this away. Then, however, he proceeds to smooth it away. I do not need Rabbi Mittleman to tell me that the early Christians were very Jewish; I stress this very point in my article and in all my writings. But the victory in the Church went to Paul, not to the Jewish-Christians (though I agree that a thin line of Jewish-Christianity remained through Christian history from Pelagius to Bonhoeffer). Paul, says Rabbi Mittleman, did not despair of the Torah; he just found the "new fact" of Jesus more important. Only a strong revulsion from the Torah could lead anyone to describe it as "the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). Rabbi Mittleman, having made Paul innocuous, offers no explanation of how the "terrible conflict" came about, and apparently prefers not to inquire. This policy of sweeping all unpleasant matters under the rug is precisely the attitude to Jewish-Christian relations of which I complain.

Norman Ravitch urges that Christianity has always prized its Jewish connection: even John says "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22). I wish I could believe that this saying has the wide irenic meaning so often put upon it nowadays, but I am afraid that in context it only means that salvation will come not from anywhere in Samaria (where Jesus is speaking) but from Jerusalem where his crucifixion will take place (see Luke 24:47 for a similar thought). These are straws to snatch at: the historical relationship between Christianity and Judaism is far more painful than Mr. Ravitch is willing to acknowledge.

Mr. Ravitch sees Paul's innovation as his ambition to convert the Gentiles, an ambition which "ethnocentrism finally succeeded in purging from Judaism" (when?). This is to assume that Judaism was not a missionary religion in Paul's time; but in fact it was. Paul's converts were mostly people who had been previously converted to Judaism by enthusiastic Jewish missionaries. Even the New Testament says that the Pharisees "compass land and sea to make one proselyte." There is a vast Jewish missionary literature stemming from this period, including Philo and the Sibylline Oracles. Judaism continued to be a missionary religion in rivalry with Christianity (see Marcel Simon, *Verus Israel*) until these efforts were stamped out by sustained Christian violence. The real difference was not in missionary endeavor, but that Pauline Christianity offered "salvation," while Judaism offered the less popular choice of hard spiritual and intellectual work. Moreover, Christianity wielded the terrible threat of damnation against non-converts, while Judaism did not, and even recognized the validity of non-Jewish monotheism.

Education & Democracy

To the Editor of Commentary:

The problem with Sidney Hook's very thoughtful article, "Education in Defense of a Free Society" [July], is that if a large part of the American public believes that the foreign policy of the United States is the moral equivalent of that of the Soviet Union, then it is not likely that education can change its mind. Education may not be effective because the ideological . . . framework within which people exist is . . . emotionally rather than intellectually based. In his book *Political Pilgrims*, Paul Hollander demonstrates this principle when he describes how credulous Western leftist intellectuals completely misperceived the reality of the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba during their pilgrimages to these countries earlier in this century. . . .

Vietnam, Watergate, media distortion, the end of religious forms in the 20th century, the frustration of living in the anomic society of the United States, the fear of the power of the Soviet Union and of a nuclear holocaust have all contributed to the need for living in secular illusion.

While I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Hook on the importance and urgency of education about the nature of a free society, I am not optimistic because illusions fulfill psychological and sociological needs and are not easily broken.

Joseph R. Aziz
Flushing, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

I would agree that Sidney Hook is a national resource; that few, if any, can surpass him as a political analyst and commentator. Nevertheless, there is more than a touch of irony in his espousal of democracy in "Education in Defense of a Free Society."

Democracy, in the American version, is the political expression of Judeo-Christianity. And, as such, it

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is rooted in a belief in God and a concomitant belief in the need for religion. Thus, Thomas Jefferson could say, "God who gave us life, gave us liberty." And George Washington, in his Farewell Address, "Of all the dispositions that lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable." . . .

But Sidney Hook is a humanist, and would sever American democracy from its roots and propel it, free-floating, into a hostile environment divested of the passion that only deeply embedded beliefs can generate.

And this, for educators, would create a crucial problem: which of the two should educators follow, Washington or Hook? If they choose Hook, how would they explain a Constitution that, given its terminology, implicitly declares that liberty is not an end in itself but a means to the achievement of a far greater end, a society worthy of a just God?

RAYMOND GARMEL
Indianapolis, Indiana

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . According to Sidney Hook, today's education should "sharpen the student's understanding of a free society . . . by [teaching] its history, celebrating its heroes, and noting its achievements." The student is to be acculturated as well as educated. . . .

What Mr. Hook has consistently failed to recognize, however, is that the liberal academy won't play his game, and won't settle for the university of "rational alternatives." What liberalism wants, and has gotten on campus, is a debating club—one that tolerates all views because it takes no view seriously. The commitment of liberalism is not to any particular content which may be said to be bad or good, but . . . to commitment itself. . . .

But Mr. Hook offers no criticism of this corrupt core of today's campus. He meets the challenge of his liberal enemies by making their universities (slightly modified) coterminous with democratic society itself. Mr. Hook is appalled by liberal government's threats to freedom. His recommendations, however, boil down to making the government resemble the campuses, preserving procedural guarantees that make it open to every interest and value, and showing no concern about the way citizens live. He would meet the international threat by challenging the procedural sins of Communism, even though the Communists themselves admit these sins and justify them as necessary to achieve their goal of a socialist utopia. No student draft, please, but an "intensive study of the theory and practice of contemporary totalitarian societies, especially the fate of human rights in those areas where Communism has triumphed." . . .

One suspects that if Mr. Hook were given political power, he would gradually move in the direction in which his liberal opponents have already moved. In trying to preserve John Dewey's "critical, questioning spirit," Mr. Hook would be reluctantly forced to accept Karl Jaspers's propaganda of freedom. He would be forced into using double-think formulas, much like those that have been adopted by today's liberalism. . . .

DAVID BROYLES
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

SIDNEY HOOK writes:

The themes raised by my critics cannot be adequately discussed in a short compass. I take the liberty of referring them to my *Political Power and Personal Freedom, The Quest for Being, Pragmatism and the Tragic Sense of Life*, and more topically *Religion in a Free Society* (the last still in print, University of Nebraska Press), in which I treat the themes at length.

With respect to the points raised by Joseph R. Aziz, I do not believe that students who during the course of their educational careers have studied in detail the nature of, and differences between, American democracy and Soviet totalitarianism will believe "that the foreign policy of the United States is the moral equivalent of that of the Soviet Union." This would be comparable to drawing an equation between the American intervention in Grenada to liberate a people from the murderous oppression of Cuban proxies and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan to impose its tyranny on a largely hostile population.

Ideological attitudes, of course, are not logically entailed by knowledge of relevant facts, but such knowledge is not irrelevant to the formation and modification of attitudes. The moral quality of a belief induced by familiarity with the facts and concern with evidence is different from one induced by brass bands and conditioning based on postulates deemed absolutely valid regardless of their consequences for human weal or woe.

I wonder whether Raymond Garmel has recently reread the Constitution. He will find neither in its provisions nor preamble any reference to God, or to building "a society worthy of a just God." It is significant that he uses the phrase "a just God," implying that there may be unjust gods. Since men build their gods in their own moral image, this makes human beings the autonomous judges of what is just or unjust. That is why the Constitution aims to establish a just society without rooting it in any of the many conflicting notions about God.

Historically, of course, the political expression of Judeo-Christianity has been theocracy, not democracy. The political structure of heaven, God, the archangels, and various orders of angels can hardly be recommended as a model for any democratic community. We owe the absence of an established church in the United States, and many of our freedoms, largely to the truth expressed in Figgis's trenchant observation: "Political liberty is the residuary legatee of ecclesiastical animosities."

I am astonished at David Broyles's characterization of the American academy, his conceptions of the critical method and liberalism, and his reading of my essay.

The American academy since the late 60's has certainly not been an area that "tolerates all views." On the contrary, the bias has been against the expression of views that defend, even critically, American foreign policy in seeking to contain the aggressions of Communism. Student sentiment is largely molded by faculties, and it is hardly an exaggeration to say, as evidence of the degree of tolerance in the climate of academic opinion, that whereas a distinguished scholar like Jeane Kirkpatrick, a principled defender of democracy, would have difficulty even in getting a hearing on major campuses, Angela Davis, the apologist for Soviet totalitarianism and the suppression of dissidents, is welcomed and invited to deliver well-paid lectures. No disciplinary action was taken by faculties against the violent student disruption of Jeane Kirkpatrick's few appearances, and it is notorious that during the troubled years of the 70's, faculties, with rare exceptions, took no action against the widespread violations of the freedom to teach

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and to learn. They usually voted amnesties for such conduct.

The genuine liberals were those who upheld the principles of academic freedom and were defamed as reactionaries for doing so. Despite my detractors, I regard myself as a liberal faithful to the principle that "justice is color-blind" and all its variants. Today most faculties and administrations have perverted the liberal principle of affirmative action into a quota system.

The liberal emphasis upon rational process is not incompatible with the spirited defense of the conclusions won by such process; and although we cannot make claims to absolute truth, we can still establish the profound differences between the imperfect freedoms of the open democratic society of the West and the totalitarian societies, failed or not, of Communism. Yes, it was John Dewey's "critical, questioning spirit" which revealed the truth about the monstrous Moscow trials and Stalin's total terror long before Khrushchev's partial revelations. And it was John Dewey, using the methods of critical intelligence, who warned the West, during the war years when the Kremlin was being hailed by many as a democratic ally rather than a co-belligerent, that measures should be taken to guarantee the freedoms of the postwar world.

Would that the academic community were as liberal as Mr. Broyles assumes! Unfortunately it would be more accurate to regard it as suffering from what I call "ritualistic liberalism"—the belief that there are no enemies to freedom on the Left, or the view that a liberal must necessarily be an anti-fascist but not necessarily an anti-Communist. Most ritualistic liberals are anti-anti-Communist. More specifically, if I may quote from something I once wrote, "Ritualistic liberalism is the reliance on rhetoric rather than logic, slogans rather than analysis of problems in the defense of freedom. It does not rethink situations afresh but makes a ritual of phrases, principles, and solutions which have come down from the past as if they were sufficient guides to complex and novel issues. It tends to develop policies that assume that all difficult situations have ideal solutions, and to disregard the weight of the historical evidence which indicates that often our effective choice may be limited to lesser evils."

Network News

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Anyone is entitled to pass subjective judgments on the quality of television (or print) journalism. But it seems to me that Paul H. Weaver, in "The Networks vs. the

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Recovery" [July], relies heavily on a thoroughly discredited "study."

The methodology of the report issued by the Institute for Applied Economics is a parody of scientific analysis, as I have demonstrated at length elsewhere. The credentials of its authors are invisible, and their objectivity is highly questionable. They set out to prove the bias of television news—and, not surprisingly, by their own curious definition they succeeded.

The most dramatic illustration of their unfairness is the conclusion that every single "negative" story they identified on all three networks was classified as biased—totally or in part. Not one piece of unfavorable news was categorized as honest, objective reporting.

As an interesting footnote to that astonishing fact, a recent Gallup poll conducted for an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce found that—among people who believe television news is biased in reporting economic news—46 percent see that bias as favoring liberals and 38 percent think we favor conservatives.

That suggests to me that we must be somewhere close to a proper balance.

DAN CORDTZ

ABC News
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Paul H. Weaver's discussion of the failings of television network journalism is marred by his own evident bias. Network journalism exists within certain necessary constraints, but Mr. Weaver shows no awareness of these constraints; he advocates instead the reform of TV journalism through the abolition of interpretative news stories. Not willing to see the bars around the caged bird, he goes further and would take away its song.

How does one decide which facts to cover in reporting to an audience of tens of millions about events concerning a whole planet? The networks' answer to this dilemma has been to form a consensus on what constitutes news, conditioned always by the availability of manpower and equipment at the scene. News clearly consists of two things: any and all acts by the President of the United States, and disasters and crimes involving multiple deaths. All else (while it may be exceedingly important) is not necessarily news for the 22-minute evening broadcast. . . .

The networks' other solution to the problem of presenting the facts is the interpretative news story. . . . Any writer or producer must learn the craft of saying many things with a few words, finding phrases and/or images which lead the reader/viewer to savor meanings, compare ideas, and think for himself. This is what television attempts to do with the interpretative news story. To argue against it is to say that television journalism should be a wire service of the air, not a literary, artistic enterprise. Journalism only has meaning, as Edward R. Murrow knew so well, when the facts are illuminated —not distorted—by the courage and conviction of an honest reporter. . . .

Mr. Weaver criticizes the networks' concentration on depressing news stories; for example, he faults them for ignoring the economic recovery. . . . But television journalists believe it is their duty to report primarily on the bad news, because they feel the public has a right to know about things which might cause harm. What is good and beneficial, many reason, does not need to be explored; it poses no threat to a free people. And they go on to argue that if they were to concentrate less on bad news—still-remaining unemployment, the gaffes of government officials, toxic waste spills, and the like—they would in effect be censoring such news. This could represent the thin end of the police state's wedge and could lead to a news apparatus controlled by those who wish the people to be oblivious to dangerous events, and thus prey to them.

This is certainly a debatable argument, and I think Mr. Weaver should address it on its merits. It may in fact be true that a focus on positive news is just what this country needs. . . .

I also wish Mr. Weaver had been more charitable to broadcasters. To earn the respect of an audience used to heroes, they do project an image of omnipotence. But it is only an image, as they well know. I do not find the men at the top of the heap like Dan Rather and Bill Moyers to be egotists—and this is from my own personal experience (I was formerly with CBS News). Perhaps my views are shared by the many people who tune in each night. Somehow they understand that the good journalist is also a person who sincerely cares.

ALAN J. SALY

Brooklyn, New York

PAUL H. WEAVER writes:

My old *Fortune* colleague and friend Dan Cordtz is wrong. My article does not "rely heavily" on the study by the Institute for Applied Economics. Two paragraphs summarize some of the Institute's findings; the remainder of the article presents my own analysis of the networks' coverage of the economic recovery based on my viewing hours of videotapes of network economic news stories.

The Institute's study had two parts. One part classified news stories as to length (short or long) and as to basic slant (positive or negative). A second part attempted to classify the content of stories according to an elaborate, sevenfold typology of bias. My analysis of the viodeotapes persuaded me that the Institute's findings about length and negativity were valid, and I quoted them in my article. But I found the second part of the study unpersuasive and unintelligible, and I therefore did not use or refer to this part of the Institute's work. It is no accident that Mr. Cordtz's letter raises questions only about this second part of the study, for there simply isn't any question about the overwhelmingly negative slant of the networks' coverage of the recovery.

Alan J. Saly's letter, a memorable combination of irrelevance, misrepresentation, and gibberish, demonstrates with wonderful vividness why TV journalism should stay away from the interpretative news story.

Capitalism

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "Underdevelopment Revisited" [July], Peter L. Berger makes many interesting points about Pacific Asia's economic success. But one line struck me as false: "The question that should be of burning urgency . . . is why capitalism has succeeded in some places and failed in others."

I doubt that capitalism has failed in any developing country. In my experience in Asia, capitalism has succeeded brilliantly where it has been tried. As Mr. Berger notes, those places include Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and most other countries along the Pacific rim where annual growth rates over the past two decades have averaged between 5 and 10 percent. But where growth has been slower, the fault does not lie with capitalism; it lies

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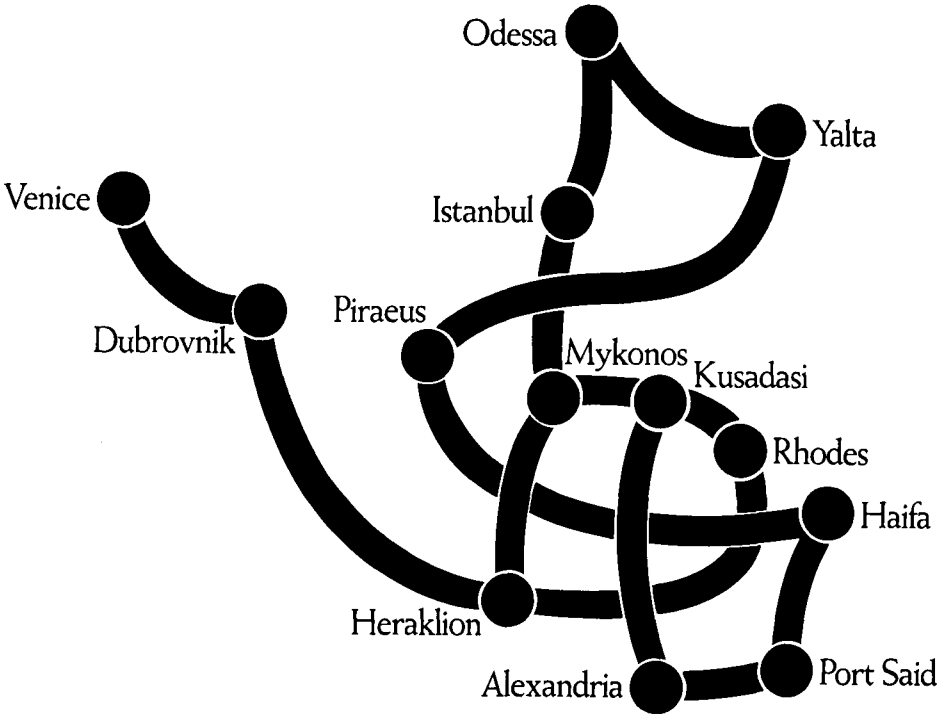

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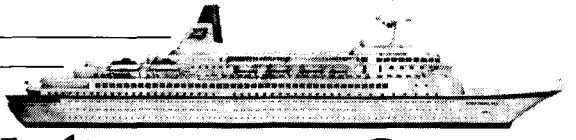

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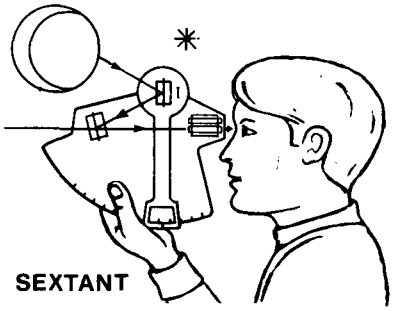

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instead largely with government policies that have interfered with capitalist incentives. This is true even in some countries that claim their economies are free.

Consider the Philippines, the only Asian nation with a Latin-style debt problem. Its growth rate has become negative; it now needs a bailout from the International Monetary Fund. Much of the renewed political opposition to President Ferdinand Marcos has been led by businessmen, not Communists. But the Philippines does not represent a failure of capitalism. . . . In fact, Marcos has intervened massively in the Philippine economy, misallocating billions in borrowed dollars to state-run projects, protecting local industry with high tariffs, aiding friends in business with government loans, making life difficult for foreign investors, and creating monopolies in agriculture. The World Bank and a few Philippine policy-makers have in recent months begun to convince Marcos to allow freer markets, but only after the manifest failure of his earlier intervention.

Similar state meddling has hampered growth in Indonesia, in Chile, and in any number of other countries commonly thought to favor free markets. A common misperception is to assume that because an authoritarian ruler is anti-Communist he must therefore be a capitalist. Not at all. He may not be a classic socialist, either. But like Mussolini, he may be a statist of a different sort, believing that the state, rather than the private sector, produces the most wealth. It pays to remember that old aphorism: the problem with capitalism is capitalists; the problem with socialism is socialism.

PAUL A. GIGOT
Hong Kong

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Peter L. Berger has done a splendid job in his article, but I am mystified by his comment that sometimes we do not know why capitalism has failed in the developing countries. On the contrary, it appears to me that such failures are due to causes which seem to be fairly well known. . . .

It is important to remember that there are at least two identifiable kinds of capitalism: (1) basic or primitive capitalism, and (2) advanced, or high-output, or industrial capitalism.

Basic capitalism has been with us since the primitive organization of society thousands of years ago. It is extremely hardy and never fails; no brutal totalitarian government has ever been able to stamp it out. It is based on the fact that people, whenever it is to their personal advantage to do so, will buy, sell, trade, or barter their goods and services in the marketplace; further, they will save and invest in entrepreneurial risk-taking if it seems personally advantageous to them to do so.

The first capitalists were probably the men who decided to save some of the grain seeds they had gathered for planting the next year, or who decided to specialize in making spears and weapons and to trade them for a share of the meat that the hunters had brought home.

But high-output capitalism is not so hardy. It takes a long time to develop and can falter or even fail when there is excessive government regulation, taxation, or interference; when it is not deemed advantageous or practical to save and invest; when the market is restricted or excessively skewed; or when money and banking are fraught with uncertainty. (The last item had much to do with the faltering of capitalism in the Depression.)

Mr. Berger has pointed out the grim fact that socialism has been a failure everywhere it has been tried in the Third World. It is one of the great mysteries of our times that those on the liberal-Left simply will not face that fact, and continue their anti-capitalist posture. . . .

JOHN H. HARWOOD
Birmingham, Michigan

Democracy

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jean-François Revel's discussion of democracy ["Can the Democracies Survive?," June] bears closely upon current experience in Britain. Here the "blame" industry (described years ago in slightly different terms by Joseph Schumpeter) is in flourishing condition. Its main focus is in the media, among a certain coterie of journalists, figures like Paul Foot or the egregious Christopher Hitchens, whose shallow and often inaccurate material aims at destroying the special British-American relationship.

But the "blame" business is not very new, and politically it is less dangerous than many think. A consistent feature of Western democ-

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racy has been the ability to contain and tolerate an amazing quantity of double-standard propaganda. More than one study has shown that the public is very skeptical about what it is told by the media and by politicians of whatever persuasion.

Nonetheless, it is astonishing to see Mr. Revel's assertion that there is no longer a political challenge to democratic institutions from within. In Britain, at any rate, a very serious challenge exists, though not in the melodramatic form so popular in fiction and in prophetic essays like *The Road to Serfdom* by F.A. Hayek, in which whole populations are terrified and/or brainwashed into a dumb tractability. The species is not yet quite that passive, at least not in the West of Europe and the United States.

The challenge in Britain takes a messier form, a gradual curdling of the body politic into mutually hostile and uninhibited pressure groups, based mainly on trade unions, "anti" organizations of one kind or another, and ethnic (i.e., "black") associations. These groupings engage in a zero-sum competition for so-called "rights"—really privileges—which are to be enforced by the administrative apparatus of government. The current miners' strike is the most spectacular example of this activity, with the miners' union demanding, in effect, sovereignty over and above Parliament itself, and attempting to enforce this demand with nothing less than a form of *Putsch*. This might be nothing more than a law-and-order problem, except for the support which the miners' left-wing fascist leader Arthur Scargill has in the Labor party and in a certain element of the community at large. Encouraged by this support, the miners have engaged in mob violence, personal brutality, arson, and other criminal acts, all reported in great detail. This has a serious effect on the morale of the electorate which goes far beyond "blame" propaganda. It is also worthy of note that a vital democratic institution, the press, has been repeatedly (and with impunity) censored by print unions who support Scargill, and that newspapers which refused to accede to this censorship have been shut down—all with encouragement and approval from the Labor Left.

I do want to mention another aspect of Mr. Revel's piece, however, because it sticks out as a surprising flaw in what is generally a useful and apposite discusion. This is his apparent assumption that the populations under left-wing tyrannies, and in Soviet Russia in particular, would, given half a chance, overthrow their governments and replace them with something like our own. I dealt with this briefly in my article on George Orwell in COMMENTARY last year ["Orwell in Perspective," March 1983]. It seems to me a prima-facie bit of wishful thinking to say that the Soviet system is sustained only by the repressive action of a small elite. This ignores the complex and powerful factor of nationalism, the fact that the political timbre and sensibility of Russia and the Soviet Union are not like ours, and the further fact that the dissident movement itself is badly fractured, often with respect to the most fundamental ideas of what should be done in the Soviet Union. There are examples, like Poland, which lend some credence to Mr. Revel's assertion. But to overgeneralize from these to the point of caricature cannot help much in dealing with the Soviet Union—nor with those who, *à l'envers et contre tout*, find it an attractive example for their own politics.

HERB GREER
Manchester, England

JEAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL writes:

I don't think I said in my article that *all* internal threats had disappeared from the democracies. As a citizen of France and an observer of Italy, I know what it means to have a strong Communist party at home. Moreover, I devote many pages in my book, *How Democracies Perish* (which has just been published in English by Doubleday), to the question of modern terrorism, which is one of the main threats to democracy today, as can be seen in Spain, Peru, and elsewhere. What I did say in the piece is that *compared to the prewar period*, the overall situation is better now, at least in Western Europe, where for the first time since 1922 there is not a single dictatorship.

I never assumed that all people living under Communist rule would automatically choose freedom if they were given the choice. On the contrary, I maintain throughout my book that democracy is a very exceptional and fragile phenomenon, which we should not take for granted. But it is only fair to stress that people living un-

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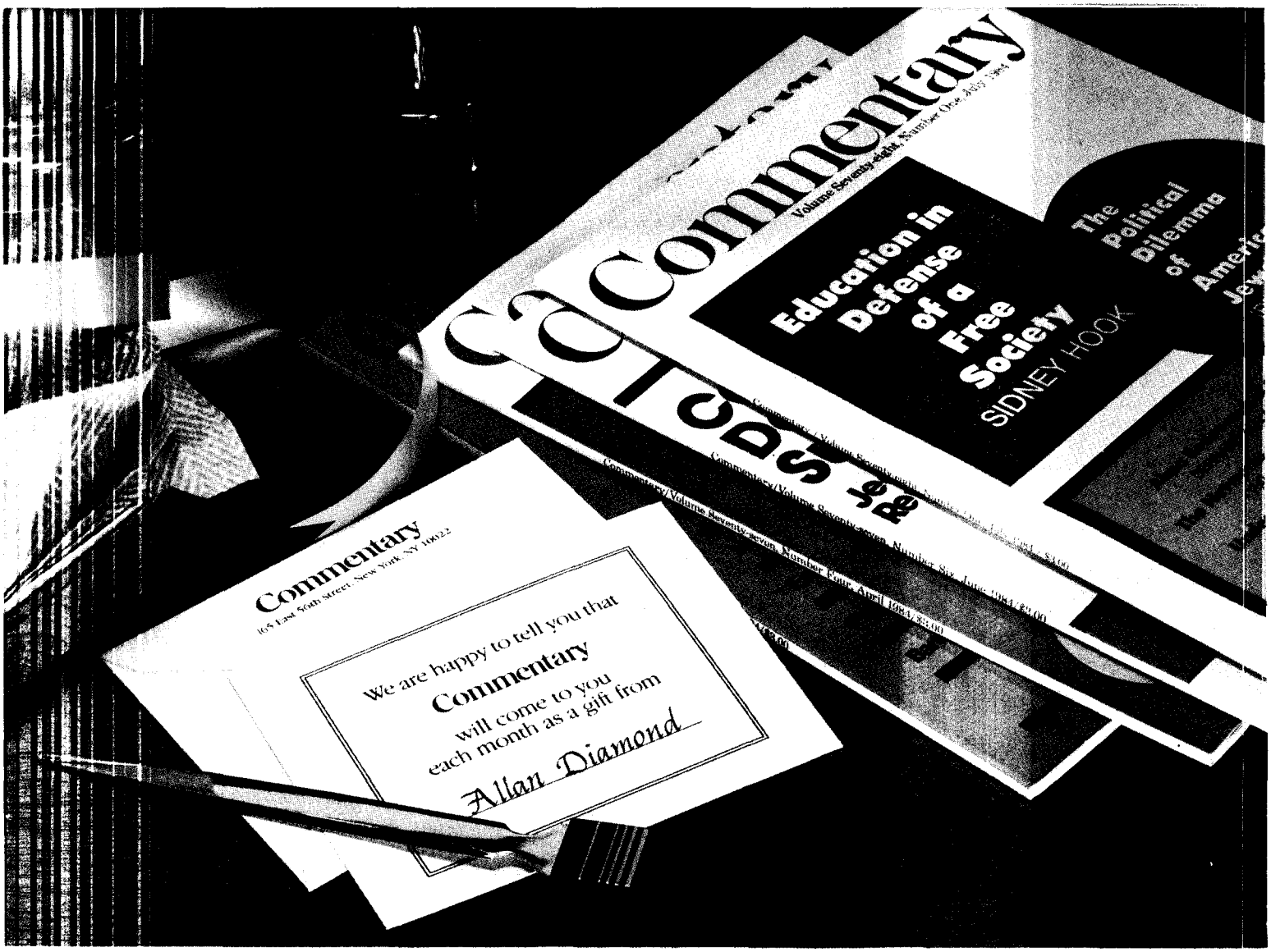

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Commentary

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der Communist rule are never given a choice, so I feel that none of us has the right to say for certain how they would decide if they were free to choose their government.

Frederick Law Olmsted

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In his review of Alfred Kazin's book, *An American Procession* [Books in Review, July], Kenneth S. Lynn characterizes Frederick Law Olmsted as elitist and racist, claims which are inaccurate and defamatory. I agree with Mr. Lynn that Andrew Jackson Downing, a persuasive figure who promoted landscape architecture and urban parks, should be credited with practicing landscape architecture in America before Olmsted. However, Olmsted, and his more experienced partner Calvert Vaux, were the first to design and direct construction of a major urban park in America.

Mr. Lynn implies that Downing and Walt Whitman and others received no credit for their efforts to promote the establishment of Fort Greene Park in Brooklyn, but this is not true. Downing was in fact Olmsted's hero. Olmsted greatly admired Downing for his writings on architecture and horticulture, and also for his concerns about matters relating to public welfare. Downing traveled to England in 1850 to find an architectural assistant and hired Calvert Vaux. Vaux met Olmsted for the first time at Downing's house. All three men agreed on many social and political issues, particularly the need for a major urban park, perhaps modeled after Birkenhead Park in Liverpool, which Olmsted admired as a "people's garden." Olmsted and Vaux were in part able to succeed in planning Central Park through the aggressive efforts of Downing and others like William Cullen Bryant, who publicized the need for a major urban park in New York.

It is perhaps debatable whether Olmsted was "the most *practical* of democratic visionaries," as Kazin claims, but clearly Olmsted was a humanitarian and forward democratic thinker. It is outrageous to claim, as Mr. Lynn does, that Olmsted and Vaux built into their plans for Central Park an "elitist disdain for the tastes of the common man." Olmsted embraced the program of social reform through art that Downing supported. In Central Park, Olmsted wanted to expose everyone—most specifically those people too poor to travel to the country—to the civilizing effects of beautiful scenery. Olmsted's and Vaux's Greensward Plan incorporated the required elements (playgrounds, parade ground, etc.) of the competition into the design by juxtaposing them in such a way as to promote social interaction, to encourage people to mingle, to "see and be seen."

Olmsted specifically thought of Central Park as a democratic development because it was an opportunity to disprove the claims of conservatives that there was no point in creating parks and other facilities open to all citizens instead of just the upper classes. Certainly he proved his point. In the years after the opening of the park, Olmsted argued forcefully and usually with success for keeping Central Park an open space to be used by everyone, and avoiding the fencing off of areas for private, elitist groups or even as display areas for monuments.

Olmsted was personally responsible for organizing the 3,000-man labor force that constructed the park and the park keepers (precursors of our park rangers) who educated people about the proper use of the park. Olmsted hired many desperately poor, unemployed, and unskilled people and molded them into an effective work force. . . .

Before his association with Central Park which began his career in landscape architecture, Olmsted traveled widely. In the turbulent decade before the Civil War, he was commissioned by Henry Raymond of the New York *Daily Times* to write about the "production, industry, and resources of the slave states," where he was to travel for several years wandering and roaming across the whole South. Olmsted promised to be sensible and unemotional in tone, in contrast to the impassioned abolitionist diatribes so common in his day. From the "yeoman" letters he sent the newspapers were assembled three books and *The Cotton Kingdom*, a condensation of the three. Even today they are valuable historical documents providing a vivid account of life in the South: portraits of diverse people from slaves to slaveowners, and analyses of Southern conditions and problems, including slavery.

Olmsted's arguments against slavery are particularly forceful, not only because they are so straightforward and unemotional in style, but also because they embrace the whole fabric of life and work in the South. He refers specifically to slaves as men, contradicting the practice in both North and South at that time of considering a slave not to be a full person. . . .

Today people might feel resentful or patronized by an attitude that exposure to an elevated class or beautiful scenery will improve their lot, but for his time Olmsted was an advanced, democratic thinker. To call him racist is just not verified by his writings and his achievements.

My sources for this letter are *Park Maker, A Life of F. L. Olmsted*, the biography by Elizabeth Stevenson; excerpts from the *Papers of F. L. Olmsted*; and other writings by him. Mr. Lynn should do his homework just as he claims Alfred Kazin should have done. Is this a case of the pot calling the kettle black?

STEVEN L. CANTOR
University of Georgia
School of Environmental Design
Athens, Georgia

KENNETH S. LYNN writes:

Steven L. Cantor's curious letter doesn't bear much relation to my review, as I will try to indicate by three brief comments.

1. Alfred Kazin's *An American Procession* calls Olmsted "the creator of the first public parks in America." This is an erroneous statement, as I made clear by pointing to the earlier achievements of A.J. Downing and Walt Whitman.

2. Olmsted was a social reformer, all right, but there is no question that his ideas were elitist. Thus, the Central Park of his conception was designed not to gratify the taste of the common man, but rather to elevate it by persuading him to enjoy the same things that men of breeding like Olmsted did.

3. Olmsted's wonderful books on the antebellum South have nothing to do with the despairing views about American civilization as a whole which overcame him at the turn of the century.

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The Case Against Arms Control

Seymour Weiss

In one sense the case against arms control is not difficult to make. One might simply ask just what evidence exists that recent nuclear-arms-limitations agreements with the USSR have actually contributed to U.S. security. Yet in spite of the fact that no such evidence can be found, emotional attachment to the hoped-for benefits, together with the presumption that arms control is politically attractive, has created what Albert Wohlstetter has sardonically described as the mad momentum of arms control. It is this emotional attachment that makes the task of rational assessment more difficult. There is an undeniable and understandable yearning among our people, reflected in Congress and certainly echoed by our allies, for a cessation of the tensions that have accompanied the years of confrontation with the USSR.

That yearning nevertheless sometimes takes forms which misperceive reality: the idea, for example, that arms control is necessary to stop the "arms race"; or that it helps to avoid wasteful military expenditures; or that it is essential to the prevention of nuclear war. Each of these pleas on behalf of arms control has been made (and no doubt will be made over and over again). But can these problems—the arms race, wasteful military expenditures, or the drift toward nuclear war—be attenuated or corrected by arms control?

To begin with the arms race: arms control cannot stop it for the simple reason that in no real sense has there been any such thing as an arms race. As Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle stated in recent congressional testimony, the number of U.S. nuclear weapons has been "declining rapidly" for two decades. Thus the U.S. has over 8,000 fewer warheads and a fourth less megatonnage today than it had in the 1960's. This reduction in U.S. inventories has been the result of a modernization program, designed in part to put safer as well as more effective weapons in the U.S. inventory. It is not the product of agreements reached with the Soviet Union.

Seymour Weiss is a retired U.S. Ambassador who has also served as director of the State Department's Bureau of Politico-Military Affairs. He is the co-author (with John Lehman) of *Beyond the SALT II Failure*. The present article is based on a paper originally presented at a Lehrman Institute Seminar.

In any case, during the same period, which also marked the apex of détente and arms control, the Soviet Union, for its part, has added enormously both to the quantity and quality of its nuclear arsenal. A U.S. government study conducted in the late 1970's compared 41 categories of U.S. and Soviet nuclear capabilities (warhead numbers, megatonnage, delivery systems, and the like) for the year 1962 (the Cuban-missile-crisis period) with the late 1970's and early 1980's. It found the U.S. ahead significantly in every category in 1962 and behind in all but two by the late 1970's (with the lead in those two projected to disappear in the early 1980's).

There has, in short, been no arms race so far as the United States is concerned; conversely, arms control has not prevented the Soviets from forging ahead in their military programs.

How about saving money? Have past agreements not saved otherwise needless expenditures for arms, and might not additional savings be achieved through arms control in the future? The answer is a clear "no" to the former and an "almost certainly not" to the latter. Take the jewel in the arms-control crown, the ABM Treaty of 1972. One argument advanced at the time this agreement was negotiated was that it would spare the nation a wasteful and massive expenditure for a ballistic-missile defense. Some estimated that such a system might cost as much as $10 billion; other estimates ran considerably higher. Moreover, by precluding ballistic-missile defenses, each side would be saved the expenditure that would otherwise be required for offensive forces designed to overcome these defenses. The nation got an ABM treaty, but did it save itself the projected expenditures? It did not.

It is true that projected expenditures were cut back when we failed to finish the deployment of the ABM defense that was under way. At least in part as a result of that decision, however, we are proposing to spend tens of billions on the MX missile and perhaps tens of billions more on the so-called Midgetman missile in order to avoid the total vulnerability of our ICBM force—the very problem which the ABM system was expressly designed to solve. Furthermore, President Reagan has suggested that we reopen the issue of strategic defense, and specifically of ABM defense. While

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a sound suggestion on the merits, such a program, if adopted, could cost additional billions over time. Thus, it is possible that had we deployed an ABM defense in the early 1970's, we might have had a less costly, and not incidentally a more effective, defense posture than is now the case. (Surprisingly, some of the most vocal supporters of arms control advocate the adoption of a launch-on-warning strategy as a means of overcoming the vulnerability of our land-based forces. While this would indeed preclude the necessity for costly new programs of the MX or Midgetman type or of ABM's designed to protect such land-based systems, the danger to U.S. security of relying on such an unstable strategy ought to be apparent. The "cost" to the nation's security of such a strategy must surely be deemed to outweigh the costs of reconstituting our land-based forces whose vulnerability was in some measure increased by earlier arms-control agreements.)

In general, as most students of the subject will testify, savings have not resulted from arms-control agreements with the Soviets. Indeed, some have charged that arms control actually results in larger expenditures. For one thing, in order to gain the support of those directly responsible for providing for U.S. military security and who worry about the effect of arms control on the capacity for self-protection, other new and costly military programs must be promised. In addition, expensive new intelligence-monitoring systems must be developed. (It is arguable that certain military and intelligence programs might not have gained approval on their own merits without the pressures to provide for special safeguards generated by arms-control proposals.)

Finally, arms control, by constraining the kinds of systems we can have, as well as the numbers, increases the difficulty of providing for our security. Unless there is a commensurate reduction in the forces on the other side, the effect may be to raise the cost or endanger the security or both. The record clearly demonstrates that there has not been such a reduction.

The charge that the alternative to arms-control agreements is nuclear war would hardly warrant refutation were it not voiced at one time or another, directly or by implication, by a host of esteemed statesmen. On sober reflection, it is probable that so sweeping an assertion is not intended to be taken literally. Yet in the heat of political battle, when cherished policy objectives are being contested, extravagant statements do tend to be made.

In reality, the relationship between arms-control agreements and the avoidance of nuclear war is complex. Some even maintain that an inverse relationship exists—that arms-control agreements, by making it more difficult to provide for our security, may thereby have increased the ultimate danger of war. One need not go so far. Still, the positive relationship between recent agreements designed to limit nuclear arms and the prevention of nuclear war itself is anything but clear and direct.

It is, then, not hard to fault arms control on the merits. Nevertheless, no U.S. President has come out flatly against arms control. Why? There are several reasons having greater or lesser weight, depending upon the individual President. First, arms control is thought to be so politically popular (a notion fanned by the media despite polls which seem to demonstrate deep suspicion on the part of the public over agreements made with the Soviets) that no one seeking office can afford to oppose it in principle. Secondly, European support of and pressure for arms control must be reckoned with if the U.S. wants a politically viable alliance. Thirdly, no President can possibly take office without feeling the heavy burden placed upon him by the very existence of nuclear weapons, and he is therefore predisposed to embrace the view that arms control at least offers some hope of relief from a risky and burdensome arms competition.

Every recent President, every national leader, whether of liberal or conservative persuasion, has thus announced in favor of arms control. Some may have demurred on the terms of particular proposals, as was the case, for example, during the SALT II debates, but none challenged the principle. None rejected the notion that arms control was good (most said "essential"); the key was to find the right formula. But the unfortunate truth is that there can at present be no "right formula."

The reason lies in the nature of our conflict with the Soviet Union. Arms control is no more an end in itself than the national-defense efforts which nations undertake to provide for their security. Each is a means to an end. (Thoughtless advocates of nuclear arms-control agreements frequently lose sight of this fact; for such people arms control is an imperative, unlinked to other aspects of the U.S.-Soviet relationship.)

The development of a nation's military forces, moreover, is an expression of a national concern for the preservation and advancement of a vision of the national interest. What gives impetus to the development of military power is the existence of *seriously opposed* national interests. The U.S. force posture is not designed to cope with Canada or France or Japan, even though we may have some differences with these nations. For these differences are minor compared with our common interests. This is not so for the Soviet Union. In addition to pursuing interests inimical to our own, the USSR is a major military power. The constitutional requirement to provide for the common defense and protect the national welfare could in consequence not be fulfilled without offsetting military capabilities.

But could it not be argued that this is precisely what makes seeking arms-control measures a prac-

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tical imperative? Cannot limitations of arms by each of the two sides substitute for a build-up? Exactly the contrary is true. The Soviet Union, at enormous material and political expense, has developed a massive conventional, theater-nuclear, and strategic-nuclear arsenal in order to advance its view of a desired international order, one dominated by Moscow. For the Soviets see military power as a precondition to maintaining a "favorable correlation of forces." Whether it is the physical suppression of freedom in Eastern Europe, the invasion of Afghanistan, the projection of Soviet forces and equipment into the Syrian-Middle East tinderbox, the use of proxies in the Third World to foment and support revolution (in the Soviet lexicon, "wars of national liberation"), or simply the exercise of political blackmail against Western Europe, military power plays the key role in advancing the Soviet view of a desirable international order.

Given all this, what is the basis for believing that the Soviets will ever agree to limit or reduce the very military power they require to maintain and advance their national objectives? What leads us to imagine that the Soviets might be willing to negotiate away their hard-won military advantages in an arms-control agreement? Why would the Soviets hand over at the negotiating table what they see no prospect of being forced to surrender in the ongoing political contest with the West, or—should it come to that—in a contest of arms?

Nothing suggests any such outcome—certainly not the recent history of U.S.-Soviet arms-control negotiations. On the contrary, those negotiations and the few significant agreements that have emerged from them point to precisely the opposite conclusion. The Soviet Union will sign arms-control agreements with the West only if such agreements are consistent with its fundamental political objectives—that is, only if they contribute to the extension of Soviet power and influence, normally at the direct expense of the West.

Past agreements have been used by the Soviets to achieve this end in a variety of ways:

• They have been designed to sow political discord between the U.S. and its allies, in the hope of promoting the dissolution of the postwar Western alliance. If an agreement can properly be seen as limiting U.S. power to support friendly states desirous of resisting the extension of Soviet power, it has served a vitally important Soviet objective. This is especially pertinent in the case of nuclear weapons, the U.S. having made solemn political commitments to employ them, if required, in defense of allies.

• If an agreement can lull the U.S. into believing that arms control reduces—or even removes—the need for self-help military measures, this contributes to Soviet purposes. In a strikingly candid warning, the Soviet leader Brezhnev told President Nixon at the time of the signing of SALT I that the USSR intended to maximize its military power within the constraints permitted by those accords. Mr. Nixon, in revealing this Soviet warning to the American people, no doubt hoped that, being so forewarned, the Congress and the public would respond by maximizing the military programs permitted the U.S. It was a vain hope, revealing a lack of comprehension of the mind set of Western society. There never was a realistic possibility that Congress, once a highly publicized and much lauded "arms-control" agreement was concluded with the USSR, would appropriate vast sums for military preparedness. And so the predictable happened. While the USSR, true to Brezhnev's word, developed a military arsenal of unprecedented dimensions during the late 60's and 70's, a period paralleling the SALT negotiations, the United States failed to keep pace, thus permitting the military balance to shift adversely both in fact and in the perception of most of the world.

• If an agreement disrupts the development of U.S. military technology while permitting the Soviets to close an important gap, it also serves Soviet purposes. One agreement which has had precisely this effect is the ABM Treaty of 1972. At the time of its signing, the U.S. held a major technological advantage in ballistic-missile defense. In the decade since the signing, the Soviets have pursued a massive development program in, and at least a partial deployment of, ballistic-missile defense. U.S. efforts during the same period limped along at a pitifully inadequate level. (Why, it was repeatedly asked by the Congress and the press, should we invest in ABM research and development when deployment of an ABM system was prohibited by treaty?) The result is that, by most public accounts, the Soviets are now capable of deploying an extensive ballistic-missile defense far more rapidly than is the U.S. Thus was the ABM Treaty utilized by the Soviets to nullify an important U.S. lead in military technology.

• If an arms-control agreement is clearly either unverifiable or unenforceable, it serves Soviet purposes. The U.S., by virtue of the nature of its society, can be expected to adhere to a strict interpretation of the terms of agreement. Indeed, examples abound whereby the U.S. exercised self-denial, fearing that a proposed arms development or production initiative *might* lead to an interpretation of inconsistency with an arms-control agreement. The Soviets, by contrast, have blatantly violated agreements. While insisting on arms-control provisions that are ambiguous, thus making verification inherently difficult, they are, in the last analysis, disdainful of the requirement to adhere even to *un*ambiguous agreements. Yet no U.S. administration has acted forcefully in the face of such violations. Even the Reagan administration, which to its credit has charged the Soviets with violations of treaty obligations, has not taken action to follow up on this charge. For the sugges-

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tion of retributive action would invoke the wrath of arms-control advocates who would deplore such action on the grounds that it would worsen U.S.-Soviet relations, as if it were the act of discovering Soviet cheating that was reprehensible rather than Soviet perfidy itself. It would appear that the Soviets' knowledge of the Western democratic process leads them to conclude (accurately) that Washington will resort to rationalizations of Soviet misbehavior to preserve arms-control agreements (and, when selling such agreements, will portray them in fictitiously favorable terms).

Can this deterioration be arrested? It is difficult to say. Arms control in the West has developed a dynamism and momentum of its own. Because of the false hopes concerning its putative benefits, most segments of Western society, ignoring the history of past agreements, call for more, not less, arms control. If SALT I worked contrary to our interests, negotiate SALT II. If the Soviets violate the Biological Arms Treaty, negotiate another treaty on any one of several subjects. If, as is occasionally the case, a U.S. proposal is advanced which might have the effect of reducing a Soviet military advantage and which is thus predictably rejected by the USSR, the cry goes up for more U.S. "flexibility" (a euphemism for making additional concessions to the Soviets).

Are there, then, any conditions that would permit an equitable agreement to limit nuclear arms? Two suggest themselves: first, fundamental Soviet political objectives might change. That is, the Soviets might abandon their quest for the advancement of a "socialist" international order responsive to Moscow. Clearly this is not a realistic prospect. Second, the U.S. might establish so formidable a level of military power that the Soviet Union would have no other alternative than to seek genuinely equitable agreements. This too seems remote. U.S. efforts to reestablish military might have a long way to go, despite the large defense budgets of the Reagan administration. (The notion that the U.S. might even try to reestablish military superiority, a condition which prevailed up until the mid-to-late 60's, is denounced by the U.S. press for reasons which remain obscure.) Moreover, the Soviets will try very hard to maintain military advantages where they have them. It is by no means clear that they would be unable to measure up in such a competition.

But if, in the broader sense, U.S. and Soviet political objectives are in radical conflict, what of those more narrowly defined interests that are presumed to emanate from successful arms-control negotiations—stability and equivalence?

Stability has generally been taken to apply to two issues: the so-called arms race and the management of crisis. As we have already seen, the arms race is largely an American illusion. American interest in and efforts at constraint are not shared by the Soviets. (Former Secretary of Defense Harold Brown once noted that "Soviet defense spending showed no response to U.S. restraint. . . . When we build, they build, when we cut, they build. . . .") The Soviet interest in constraint seems to be limited to U.S. military technology. In any event, more than a decade of arms control has seen the Soviet Union, with a much smaller GNP than the U.S., succeed in outdistancing the U.S. in a wide range of military (including nuclear) armaments. It would appear that the Soviets do not see such competition as fundamentally destabilizing.

Even less do they appear to share U.S. concern with crisis stability. Years of effort to persuade the Soviets that fixed MIRVed ICBM's are inherently destabilizing have been unavailing. U.S. analysts have emphasized that during a time of intense crisis such fixed systems would be so vulnerable to preemptive attack that the temptation would be great to fire the missiles before they could be destroyed. Moreover, once dispatched toward their targets, these missiles, unlike bombers, are not recallable. The Soviets, however, have shown little propensity to acknowledge the validity of these arguments, perhaps because they are not entirely unhappy with the vulnerability of our ICBM's to a preemptive strike.

Nor is seeking equivalence between the two strategic forces an apparent Soviet interest. In the SALT I negotiations, according to Ambassador Paul Nitze, the U.S. recognized that the asymmetrical characteristics of U.S. and Soviet strategic systems would require the two sides to develop certain formulas which, if accepted, would create equivalence between their respective military capabilities. But the negotiations demonstrated that the Soviets did not share the U.S. desire to seek such an equivalence. Instead the Soviets sought a condition they described as "equal security." As defined by the Soviets, equal security meant that they must be permitted military forces in the aggregate superior to those maintained by *all* other potential adversaries. So defined, "equal security" is closer to the now outdated U.S. concept of strategic superiority than to the U.S. arms-control concept of strategic equivalence.

We have seen that fundamentally incompatible political objectives logically preclude arms-control arrangements which by U.S. standards are fair to both sides. Yet it now appears that even on narrower grounds involving arms-control objectives like stability and equivalence, there is little reason to project a commonality of interest. As George Kennan once said:

> There is no use trying to swing Russians into line by referring to common purposes to which we may both have done lip-service at one time or another. . . . For them it's all a game. And when we try to come at them with arguments based on such common professions, they become doubly wary.

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SUPPOSE, for the sake of argument, that the case made here against arms control is essentially correct. The indictment would be a powerful one. The only possible conclusion one could draw would be that contemporary nuclear arms-control agreements with the Soviet Union have been contrary to U.S. national interests. Even so, no issue as complex as this one is likely to lead to so simple and direct a conclusion. Might there be a consideration not yet addressed that would impart to the arms-control efforts of the last two decades something more than a passing redeeming value? May it not be that even if the agreements were "flawed" in some respects, *the process itself* was—and is—of great value? For whatever one may think of the substantive merit of any particular agreement, the process keeps U.S. and Soviet officials in direct contact, exchanging views on nuclear strategy, weapons capabilities, and the intentions of the two sides. Surely, in the nuclear age, nothing can be of greater importance than the continuing contact that the arms-control process provides.

But is it really true that a better comprehension of an adversary's purpose offers promise of more tranquil relations? Not necessarily. Reviewing the history of the early 1930's, especially the arms-control efforts made at the time, one discovers that despite ample contact and a continuing process, Europeans whose vital interests were being challenged nevertheless deluded themselves about the purposes of the Third Reich. As Richard Perle wrote in 1981:

> After all, the political and bureaucratic elite in prewar Britain believed itself to be clear-eyed and hard-headed in matters of international politics and diplomacy. Its members believed in arms control and thought that it could stabilize the military balance in Europe in the 1930's. But they approached arms control with claims of prudence and caution that ring not so very different from those heard during the 1970's.

For example, Perle points out, the British Imperial Defense Committee in 1932 declared:

> The military forces of the nations . . . should be limited in such a way as to make it unlikely for any aggressor to succeed with a "knockout blow." The committee went on to urge an end to what is called "disarmament by example," a notion that Paul Warnke could be found advocating some forty-five years later.

Yet when the British government proposed a modest increase in the Royal Air Force over a five-year period beginning in 1934, "the Labor and Liberal opposition brought a censure motion regretting that: 'His Majesty's Government should enter upon a policy of rearmament . . . certain to jeopardize the prospects of international disarmament and to encourage a revival of a dangerous and wasteful competition.' "

Additional examples from British history in the 1930's could be cited, but the message is clear. It appears not only possible, indeed it may be the norm, for Western democracies to understand that they are confronting a serious adversary, to observe concrete evidence of military preparation whose purpose (given the opposed political objectives of the two sides) can only be political intimidation or aggressive military action, and yet to rationalize all this away. Such self-delusion is not surprising when the consequences of facing reality are so challenging and require hard sacrifice and courageous political leadership. How much easier it is to project an image of hope for a brighter future, free of these burdensome considerations. Under such circumstances, arms control has been, and continues to be, a longed-for panacea.

Self-delusion of the sort described here has little or nothing to do with lack of information due to inadequate contact with the adversary. British officials up to and including the Prime Minister met repeatedly with Hitler and his associates, but proximity did not breed a general comprehension of reality. Conversely, Winston Churchill required no intimate contact to perceive the truth. Here we have the essence of the matter. The process itself offers little hope for benefit when the parties bring divergent purposes to the table.

But still, is it not better to "talk than fight"? Consider the answer of Dean Acheson to this question:

> I have heard people who should know better . . . say happily, "As long as they are talking they are not fighting." Nothing could be more untrue; they are fighting. . . . To our minds international conferences and international negotiations are so completely means for ending conflict that we are blind to the fact that they may be and, in the hands of experts, are equally adapted to, continuing it. . . . "There is no alternative to negotiations with the Russians" is the constant theme of a well-known columnist and a prominent politician in this country. . . . This is, of course, silly. For if there is no alternative, and if the Russians will only negotiate, as is now the case, on their own terms, then there is no alternative to surrender. . . .

Nothing that has happened since has affected the truth of these words, and much that has happened since has strengthened the case against arms control. It does not serve our security, it does not save money, and it does not lessen the risk of war. Arms control is certainly politically popular, but it is just as certainly the repository of false and dangerous hopes.

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"Peace for Galilee": Success or Failure?

Eliot A. Cohen

A COMPLETE and satisfying history of Israel's war in Lebanon, "Operation Peace for Galilee," will not come into our hands for many years. The archives on all sides are closed to the researcher, and the passions of the day preclude detailed investigations into the complicated motives and deeds of the key actors. Most of those who took part have yet to write their memoirs; many of those whose memoirs we would like to read either have met or will meet untimely ends. Finally, much of the information we would like to have will remain for years closely held by military specialists. Since 1967, Middle East wars have become an operational data base for the armies of both the participants and their patrons, and the advantage goes to the side that secretly learns best the lessons of recent history.

Nonetheless, the time is ripe for some reflection on the events of June 1982 and their aftermath, and three recent books are valuable in that regard.

Richard Gabriel's *Operation Peace for Galilee** is a straightforward account of the war from June through August 1982, supplemented with a brief pre-history of the Lebanese problem and a short postscript. The layman will find it readable, although its main audience will be those who take a professional interest in military matters. It examines in some detail the technological and tactical problems the Israelis faced, and provides substantial "order of battle" information about the relative size and configuration of the opposing forces. It attempts to draw lessons from the war (mostly of a tactical and low-level organizational nature), and is based in part on primary research in Israel and Lebanon.

Gabriel, a prolific although not always a reliable writer on military affairs, is best known for a book he co-authored, *Crisis in Command*, an interesting if tendentious critique of the American military. There, as in the current work, his data—for example, results of morale surveys of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF)—are of interest, even if his interpretation is sometimes suspect. Occasional errors (such as the reference in his introduction to "violent clashes" between the Palmach and the new IDF in 1948) make one hesitant to accept everything Gabriel reports as accurate. On the whole, though, those in search of a straightforward account of the fighting could do worse than read his book.

A more interesting, yet more frustrating, work is by Ze'ev Schiff and Ehud Ya'ari, entitled *Israel's Lebanon War*.† Ya'ari is a prominent Israeli television reporter, and Schiff (who writes for the elite daily *Ha'aretz*) is the dean of Israeli defense correspondents and author of a number of fascinating books on the IDF and its wars. Schiff's access to prominent personages in the IDF and the Israeli government is generally acknowledged to be unparalleled, and lends credibility to this well written and troubling book, which has already caused a stir in its Hebrew version.

Schiff and Ya'ari discuss the fighting on the ground, but their main interest lies in the diplomacy of the war and the high politics of its conduct. Their central point is that the then Israeli Defense Minister Ariel Sharon deliberately deceived and manipulated the Israeli Cabinet and perhaps even the then Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, into embarking on an ever-widening war. To judge by context it would appear that the authors have received inside information from the then Communications Minister Mordechai Zippori and the former head of Israeli military intelligence, Major General Yehoshua Saguy. The authors use this information, together with material gathered from other open and confidential sources, to paint Sharon in the darkest possible hues.

Yet, perhaps because their sympathies so completely lie with the hundreds (possibly thousands) of young officers and enlisted men who found the war disturbing, Schiff and Ya'ari fail to provide us with an adequately detached study of its successes and failures. They locate the origins of the war in the naiveté and bellicose irrealism of Israel's Prime Minister and Defense Minister, see its outcome as an almost unmitigated strategic disaster, and judge its conduct at the higher levels to

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* Hill & Wang, 242 pp., $16.95.

† Edited and translated by Ina Friedman, Simon & Schuster, 308 pp., $17.95.

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have been a travesty of democratic civil-military relations. Their work is, in short, a fascinating narrative and a powerful polemic, but not a work of analysis.

Finally, Itamar Rabinovitch in his *The War for Lebanon 1970-1983** has provided a lucid, scholarly study of the origins of the Lebanon of today. He disentangles the personalities and factions that have reduced the one-time "Switzerland of the Middle East" to horrifying chaos and civil war, and he provides a useful account of the twists and turns of Syrian policy, as directed by the most Machiavellian of Arab leaders, Hafez al-Assad. Rabinovitch makes clear to the reader the extraordinary complexity of Lebanese politics, which has frustrated the plans of all external powers, not least Israel, the United States, and even Syria.

BY BUILDING on Gabriel's military data, Schiff's and Ya'ari's anecdotes, and Rabinovitch's historical background, one can begin to come to terms with the causes, course, and consequences of Peace for Galilee. The time is ripe to do so, for the war *has* changed the constellation of forces in the Middle East, and does offer lessons not only for Israelis, but for students of American strategic problems as well. Enough time has passed, in other words, to attempt a more detached politico-military analysis than could be found in the reporting by the American press in the months following June 1982.

That reporting, it is now generally acknowledged, was some of the most inaccurate and prejudicial war coverage this country has ever seen. Reporters accepted on faith the grossly inflated casualty estimates provided by Yasir Arafat's brother, and indulged in grotesque comparisons between the siege of Beirut and that of Stalingrad —betraying thereby not merely bias, but an elementary ignorance of the violence of World War II on the Eastern front. They failed to report the extraordinary and generally successful measures, including those which put at risk Israeli soldiers' lives, undertaken by the IDF to reduce civilian casualties. In this connection it is interesting that Schiff and Ya'ari, whose suspicion of and dislike for Sharon are beyond doubt, describe the Defense Minister's harangues to his generals to keep civilian casualties low (by minimizing the use of air strikes in cities, for example).

All this is not to say that the invasion of Lebanon and its aftermath (in particular, the Sabra and Shatila massacre carried out by Maronite militiamen allowed into the camps by the IDF) did not and does not pose moral problems for Israel. Yet when one considers both the events and the public reaction to them, one is struck by how high the Israeli standard has been and remains. In what other country would a brigade commander, who could not in good conscience order his men to attack a well-defended city, be allowed to resign with honor, even after attempts by the head of government in person to *coax* (not order) him to attack? In what other country would some 5 percent or more of the population gather peacefully to demonstrate for a commission of inquiry into a massacre committed not by its own troops but by those of its allies? In what other country would such a commission force the resignations of a Minister of Defense, a Chief of Military Intelligence, and the retirement in disgrace of a respected and highly competent Chief of Staff?

Gabriel—a major in the U.S. Army Reserve—discusses Israeli behavior at some length:

> In built-up areas, IDF soldiers were specifically forbidden to throw hand grenades or satchel charges into houses or buildings before entering them. . . . The urban ambush using civilians as cover or shields became a basic PLO tactic. It was a tactic that the Israelis knew would be employed against them, and they chose nonetheless to restrain their troops rather than risk greater civilian casualties. . . . Any soldier caught with any kind of souvenir—liquor, pictures, cigarettes—in any quantity . . . is subject to immediate punishment. If the item exceeded $33 in value, the punishment is a jail term . . . the IDF has been more restrained than any modern army that comes to mind—certainly more morally restrained than the American army was in Vietnam. . . .

The war inflicted civilian casualties (between 8,000 and 10,000 dead, according to most sources) for two reasons: first, the fighting took place in a densely populated area; secondly, the PLO deliberately kept civilians in place to serve as a shield for Palestinian soldiers and to gain a propaganda victory over the Israelis. Had the Israelis been as ruthlessly determined as many claimed, it would have been a simple matter for them to unleash their staggering firepower and administer to Tyre, Sidon, and Beirut the same treatment that the Allies accorded Hamburg, Dresden, and Berlin in 1943-45.

The moral dilemma of the IDF in its conduct of this war deserves examination, but only in the context of a broader examination of the war as a study in ends and means. Such a prudential consideration of the war would ask: what was Peace for Galilee intended to accomplish? Were those objectives reasonable, and were they achieved? What unforeseen results stemmed from the war? Were they unforeseeable? Finally, were the costs—human above all, but political and social as well—worth it?

STRATEGY means the use of force for political ends—a definition somewhat at variance with current usage (which sees strategy more as stratagem, a clever device or ruse). The greatest student of war, Karl von Clausewitz, wrote in the final book of his masterpiece, *On War*:

* Cornell University Press, 243 pp., $19.95.

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> No one starts a war—or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so—without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it. The former is its political purpose; the latter its operational objective. This is the governing principle which will set its course, prescribe the scale of means and effort which is required, and make its influence felt throughout down to the smallest operational detail.

This is true even when a state is fighting for its life, but all the more so when it embarks upon a war for limited political ends, as did Israel in 1982.

Here, in acceptance of the fact that we are dealing with a classic case of Clausewitzian limited war, must rest the foundations of any evaluation of Peace for Galilee. This is a hard fact to accept, because most of Israel's wars (1948, 1967, and 1973) have been wars for survival, into which political purpose erupted only late in the fighting or in its aftermath. Moreover, although an incident of terrorism (the attempted assassination on June 3, 1982 of the Israeli ambassador to London) triggered Peace for Galilee, the campaign was a far more ambitious affair than a retaliatory raid of the usual kind.

Democratic peoples, Americans and Israelis among them, have trouble with the notion that war can be simply a tool of statecraft. This democratic (or, more properly, liberal) bias, however, flies in the face of all that history or theory—or indeed, common sense—can teach us about the nature of international politics. Security threats are rarely amenable to a single spasmodic application of violence; they can, moreover, be both serious enough to merit the use of force and limited enough so as not to require every last ounce of military effort.

There was an Israeli precedent, and a good one, for Peace for Galilee. In 1956 David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan masterminded the Sinai campaign, an operation designed to look, at first, like a mere retaliatory raid but which had three political purposes: to secure Israeli transit rights through the Suez Canal; to insure similar rights in the Straits of Aqaba (blockaded by Egypt); and to induce the Egyptian government to prevent fedayeen (terror) raids across the border. Sinai was at least two-thirds a success: the southern border remained quiet until 1967 and Israeli shipping passed unhindered through the Straits (though not Suez).

By the late 1970's a threat warranting the application of force had emerged on Israel's northern frontier, which until earlier in that decade had been the most peaceful of Israel's borders. The influx of Palestinian refugees following the Jordanian civil war of 1970 (adding to a Palestinian population in place since 1948), the increasing turmoil of Lebanese politics leading up to the civil war of 1975-76, and Syrian intervention (first against the Christians, then for them, then against them again) transformed the frontier area. The Lebanese central government, never strong to begin with, dissolved, and the country's real nature emerged—a congeries of feudal fiefdoms dominated by aristocratic warlords enforcing their authority with the aid of brutal, well-armed bands of retainers. In this chaos the Palestinians (themselves fractured into various groupings, some quite hostile to one another) became the dominant power in Lebanon south of Beirut, with the exception of a few Christian and Druse enclaves. A mini-state appeared, in which the PLO arrogated to itself powers of taxation, economic control, conscription, and all the other internal apparatus of an independent government.

From this base Palestinian terrorists launched a series of exceptionally bloody attacks against Israel, including the massacre of 37 civilians on a Tel Aviv-bound bus, and the hostage-taking at a schoolhouse in Ma'alot. The Litani operation of 1978, in which the IDF briefly occupied a strip of land extending to the river of that name (some twenty kilometers from the border), brought only a brief respite. To be sure, from time to time truces were arranged. Ironically, one of the more successful of these had been in effect until the assassination attempt in London (conducted, also ironically, by a splinter Palestinian group which specialized in killing moderate Palestinians more than Israelis). Nonetheless, the danger was chronic and growing.

THE threat now took several forms. First and foremost was the instability caused by loosely disciplined PLO bands in the no-man's-land immediately north of the border (again with the exception of the small strip controlled by a pro-Israeli Christian militia). Similar conditions along the Mexican frontier in 1916, it should be remembered, resulted in American mobilization and cross-border expeditions led by General John Pershing, subsequent commander of the American Expeditionary Force in World War I.

But other developments were equally disquieting. The *nature* of the terrorist threat had changed. Not only were terrorist groups attempting to infiltrate by land and sea; their possession of a mini-state enabled them to acquire long-range rockets and artillery, from which they could shell Israeli settlements. This was a completely new and insidious kind of danger, against which the Israeli tradition of territorial defense could not serve. Palestinian cannon and rocket launchers, amply supplied with ammunition, laid down barrages which caused thousands of civilians, for the first time in modern Israeli history, to flee the border settlements and towns. Ben-Gurion once remarked that "if we do not go to the border, the border will come to us"; hence the Israeli policy of settling populations on the very edges of Israeli territory. This policy now stood at risk.

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The PLO mini-state also enhanced the independence of PLO leaders, particularly Yasir Arafat, and their international standing. Throughout the 1970's Arafat waged a generally successful campaign to become a major player in Arab politics, to outmaneuver King Hussein of Jordan, and to secure his own position as, in effect, the head of a key Arab state. The enhanced position of Arafat even led to cautious and sporadic American attempts to open lines of communication to the PLO.

A third security threat stemmed from the Syrian presence in Lebanon. Although the Syrians were careful to adhere to tacit agreements with the Israelis (keeping their forces north of the Litani, and preventing terrorists from operating from the Golan Heights), they had obtained a valuable strategic position in Lebanon, particularly once they introduced mobile surface-to-air missiles (SAM's) into the Bekaa valley. Again, ironies abound. Both before the war and in its aftermath the Syrians were far more scrupulous about adhering to the "rules of the game" than virtually any other Arab state, and one reason for their relatively slow reaction to Peace for Galilee was their confidence that Israel would not violate the rules by advancing to the Beirut-Damascus highway.

Faced with this complex threat (and I have simplified it by leaving out nuances as well as a consideration of Lebanese domestic politics), Israeli leaders had a difficult task in selecting and explaining to the IDF and the world both the fundamental political objectives and the operational aims of a campaign. In public, at any rate, the political objective was defined as securing quiet for Israel's northern settlements ("Peace for Galilee") and the operational objective as a forty-kilometer incursion.

The setting of political objectives, however, is a far more difficult task than it might appear—hence the profundity of Clausewitz's observation. Consider just a few of the possibilities:

- The destruction of PLO forces within artillery range of the border settlements.
- The permanent elimination of the PLO mini-state.
- The neutralization of the PLO as a major factor in (a) Western politics, or (b) Arab politics (two very different objectives).
- Dealing a defeat to Syrian forces that would destabilize Syrian domestic politics.
- Forcing a realignment of Syrian military power in Lebanon, to include withdrawal of SAM's, and possibly withdrawal to the north of Lebanon.
- Forcing the withdrawal of all Syrian forces from Lebanon.
- The improvement of Israel's geostrategic position, by seizing the north-south avenues of approach from Lebanon to Israel and the high ground dominating the Bekaa valley.
- The creation of an independent Christian mini-state to serve as an Israeli ally, thereby fulfilling an old Zionist aim of an alliance of minorities (Christian, Druse, Kurds, and others) in the Arab world.
- The creation of a strong Lebanese government capable of controlling the Palestinians and, eventually, ejecting the Syrians.
- Coercing an old (or a new) Lebanese government into signing a peace treaty with Israel, thereby creating yet another precedent for *formal* Arab accommodation with Israel.

All these objectives had some merit. Most, however, were incompatible, as the Israelis discovered. Thus, a humiliated Syria would (and did) make every effort to prevent the emergence of a strong Lebanese state. Thus, too, a Christian-dominated Lebanon could not be a strong *Lebanese* state: other groups (the Druse, the Shi'ites, and others) were too powerful.

Moreover, each of these political objectives suggested different operational objectives and methods. This became apparent once the forty-kilometer mark—a deceptively concrete limit of advance—was announced. Communications Minister Zippori asked a discomfited Sharon whether the forty-kilometer line should be drawn from Rosh HaNikra in the west, or Metulla (farther north) in the east. The one would suggest an operation aimed purely at the PLO mini-state; the other would take the Israelis to Beirut and the Beirut-Damascus highway. The Syrians might not (probably would not) have fought to prevent the first; they certainly would (and did) fight to obstruct the second.

THE evidence suggests that only one man, Ariel Sharon, had a coherent war plan, and that he did not dare to share it openly with other cabinet ministers, including, possibly, the Prime Minister himself. Sharon had, since the early 1970's, begun to see Israel as, in effect, a great power, capable of independent political-military action of an unusual and untraditional kind. He had long adhered to the view that the Palestinian problem could and should be resolved by replacing Hashemite Jordan with a Palestinian state bordering Israel along the Jordan River, a state that could be coerced by Israeli military power into tacit acceptance of Israel's right to exist. In this somewhat self-contradictory view, new psychological facts had to be created. The PLO mini-state had to be shattered in order to weaken the PLO's grip on West Bank Arabs, to induce them to accept the permanence of an Israeli presence, and to turn the eyes of the Palestinian diaspora from direct action against Israel to an internal solution—the toppling of King Hussein.

Sharon also believed that Israel could create new allies for itself. The Begin government early on forsook a long-standing policy of only limited support for the Lebanese Christians in favor of a much closer alliance. Sharon viewed Bashir Gemayel—a stronger and more pro-Israel Christian

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leader than any save, possibly, Camille Chamoun —as a future leader who would help consolidate Israeli successes by establishing a Christian-dominated, pro-Israel Lebanon. Sharon seems to have expected that the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon would therefore last only a few weeks or at most a few months. Thereafter, the country (including the more than half-million residents of the area south of Beirut) would return to the control of a government prepared to suppress the remnants of the PLO, sign a peace treaty with Israel, and help eject the Syrians.

This extraordinarily ambitious program had some basis in the realities of the Israeli position. Consider, first, the growth in Israeli power. The IFD of 1982 was far different from the Israeli army of the past. In 1973 the IDF was still a militia-based army which substituted ingenuity and skill for advanced equipment, which relied for logistical support on a mobilized economy (commandeered milk trucks carried some Israeli munitions across Suez in 1973), and which excelled primarily in two types of equipment—airplanes and tanks. Even in these areas the Israelis concentrated on refurbishing and extracting maximum utility from rather elderly equipment.

By 1982, as a result of military reform, industrial expansion, vastly increased expenditures, and huge American loans and grants, the IDF had transformed itself. Its first-line aircraft were state-of-the-art American F-15's and F-16's, equipped with suites of electronic-warfare devices, of which there had been no trace in 1973. Indigenously manufactured tanks (the durable and safe Merkava), equipped with the latest reactive armor, computer gun-laying, and high-technology rounds (the Hetz, or arrow round, also Israeli-made), were more than a match for the best Soviet equipment. In the manufacture and operational use of remotely-piloted vehicles (RPV's) the Israelis matched any country in the world. The artillery, traditionally Israel's weak suit, was vastly larger and more effective than in 1973, and was also equipped with new, more lethal, improved munitions. Logistics, hitherto a matter of inspired improvisation, was handled by fleets of cargo trucks and helicopter transports. Moreover, this growth in quality was matched by an increase in quantity. According to Gabriel's figures, the Israelis had some 1,200 tanks in 1973 and over 3,800 in 1982, and 300 self-propelled artillery pieces in 1973 as against almost 1,000 in 1982, many of greater caliber than earlier.

Much of this build-up was undertaken in response to an intensifying threat from Syria and Iraq, now heavily armed by the Soviets with the best equipment they had available for export. Nonetheless, the fact is that by 1982 the IDF was a great-power army, of extraordinary size (a tank fleet comparable to that of the Federal Republic of Germany, for instance) and sophistication. Unlike virtually any other American ally except the Europeans, Australia, and Japan, the Israelis could make full use of the best in American technology—indeed, could match that technology with their own in a number of fields. Operational confidence in this force was far higher than at any time since 1973. Such long-range operations as Entebbe (1976) and the destruction of the Iraqi nuclear reactor (1981) showed that Israel's reach was long, its aim sure.

The political context also seemed right for an ambitious campaign. The then U.S. Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, was, unlike most previous Secretaries, known for his pro-Israel views, as was President Reagan. Israeli officials expected—and, for the first few days, received—tacit American support for Peace for Galilee.

Additionally, Bashir Gemayel seemed an unusually forceful leader. By ruthless means (including the assassination of erstwhile allies and other fellow Christians) he had built up his family's organization, the Phalange, into a substantial fighting force and coerced most of Lebanon's Christian militias into a merger with it. He was undoubtedly anti-Palestinian, and even willing to take on the Syrians.

All this notwithstanding, Sharon miscalculated badly. Israeli military power was indeed great: the elimination of the Syrian SAM's, the skill with which a mechanized force penetrated mountain and urban terrain, and the spectacularly lopsided air battles with the Syrians (where losses were on the order of a hundred to one in favor of the Israelis) testified to that. But while the IDF may have been a different army in terms of equipment, *institutionally* it was still a militia army, tightly linked with a civilian society acutely sensitive to casualties; still an army which viewed its primary mission as that of defending the homeland from enemies who would destroy it and slaughter the inhabitants; still an army which adhered to high standards of humane conduct. It was in the nature of things that all three aspects would cause severe disciplinary and morale problems in the context of a limited war fought in cities. Indeed, Sharon tacitly admitted this by his caginess in describing the ultimate limits of advance—a caginess which infuriated not merely his colleagues, but his commanders as well.

Furthermore, the political context was far less favorable than Sharon could, and should, have supposed. If some American statesmen were pro-Israel, others (most notably the Secretary of Defense, Caspar Weinberger) were not. If the U.S. would tolerate a limited operation against PLO regular forces in Lebanon, it would have difficulty in accepting a prolonged siege of cities, including an Arab capital. Whether one chooses to ascribe this to the advent of television or the Vietnam syndrome, no President could witness for long the use of American airplanes and American bombs to break a band of refugees ensconced in a major

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city. Sharon compounded the problem by, on his own initiative and without Cabinet approval, unleashing bombardments of Beirut while American negotiations were under way, and after Begin had made a promise of restraint to the American President.

Israeli self-deception was even greater with regard to the character and prospects of the Christians. Here Schiff and Ya'ari are particularly interesting on Menachem Begin, who is not normally viewed as being naively optimistic about non-Jews. They describe a man (and, to be fair, his views were shared by many) who saw in the Christian community of Lebanon an embattled minority not unlike the Jews of Israel, a community that would, in time, emerge as a free and forthcoming ally of the Jewish state. He seems to have believed as well that the Christian nations of the West would sympathize with the plight of their co-religionists in the Muslim East, particularly in an era of bitter and violent anti-Western Islamic fundamentalism.

Such thoughts were blindly generous. The Western states cared, and care, very little for the fate of the Christian minority in Lebanon. More important, the Christian community of Lebanon (with a few notable and honorable exceptions) has little sentimental use for Israel, something Begin discovered when Bashir Gemayel withheld his forces from Peace for Galilee and then wriggled to avoid signing a peace treaty with the Jewish state. A fellow Christian's bomb brought to an end Gemayel's brief presidency of Lebanon, but even had it lasted, one suspects that Israel was bound to be disappointed by an ungrateful and uncontrollable client. (Yet another irony: that Israel, whose fractiousness has often infuriated American statesmen, should find itself with a far less controllable client state of its own.)

As Sabra and Shatila all too clearly revealed, the Christian element in Lebanon was utterly different in its methods and scruples from Israel. This some Israelis had known all along, and others (Begin in particular) should have guessed. Schiff and Ya'ari describe the clandestine visit of an Israeli emissary from the Rabin government to Camille Chamoun, a major Christian leader, in 1976:

> When they arrived at Camille Chamoun's residence, another lesson in the ways of the Lebanese war awaited the Israeli delegation. "I want you to see our girls," the elderly leader said without the slightest trace of salacious meaning. In the courtyard stood four young women in combat fatigues sporting hand grenades in their belts. "One of them is a Christian Palestinian," Chamoun explained, "another has a Russian mother. They are all veteran fighters."
>
> "What have they managed to accomplish?" Ben-Eliezer asked skeptically. Immediately, the first girl produced a transparent plastic bag containing amputated fingers. "She takes a finger as a trophy from each of the men she's killed," Chamoun explained steadily, informatively. The second girl took a small bag of earlobes out of her knapsack. Suddenly stricken with nausea, Ben-Eliezer barely muttered some polite sounds of admiration before ducking back into the house.

A good part of Israeli domestic opposition to the war stemmed from the belief that it was at least in part on behalf of people like these that it had been waged.

In addition to all this, the Israeli leadership underestimated the tenacity and shrewdness of its Syrian opponents, who could only be expelled from all of Lebanon at a far greater cost than Israel was willing to pay. Syrian troops (particularly the Syrian commandos equipped with anti-tank missiles) fought bravely and skillfully in the Bekaa and along the Beirut-Damascus highway, the only areas where they were committed in strength.

Finally, the idea of a quick victory and swift withdrawal was ludicrous. No organized force could create order in southern Lebanon except the Syrian army or the IDF. Even a compliant Gemayel government simply lacked the organizational wherewithal to control a large and heterogeneous population of Shi'ites, Druse, and other groups. A similar lack of realism subsequently bedeviled American policy, which required that an effective, nonsectarian (!) Lebanese army be created by American trainers within a few months under the guns of the Sixth Fleet.

SHARON'S grand scheme was thus doomed to failure. This failure was exacerbated by the way in which he manipulated his colleagues in the Cabinet. Schiff and Ya'ari note that this was a Cabinet, unlike any in earlier Israeli history, devoid of civilian expertise in military affairs and hence reluctant (with the notable exception of Zippori, a former Deputy Minister of Defense) to take issue on military matters with a war hero. Sharon was therefore able to present the Cabinet with a set of *faits accomplis*, with seemingly minor adjustments to original plans, and with "unforeseen developments." But in the end these tactics earned him the mistrust of all—even, apparently, Begin. IDF leaders, who had a number of contingency plans and were prepared to improvise new operations, seem to have been equally bewildered and suspicious.

Apart from the intrinsic flaws of Sharon's plan, its implementation, with all the attendant disruption of sound civil-military relations and IDF morale, made it a virtual disaster in internal terms. For the first time in Israeli history, soldiers —not many, in any other context but that of the IDF—began to accept jail terms rather than serve on the front lines, and Israeli officers resigned their commissions rather than lead them into battle.

Today, Israeli troops still garrison southern Lebanon, and an increasingly restive population provides support for Palestinian and non-Palestin-

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ian guerrillas who inflict a steady trickle of casualties on IDF soldiers, many of them middle-aged family men on reserve duty. Syrian forces remain ensconced in central and northern Lebanon, and dominate Lebanese politics; Bashir Gemayel's brother, President Amin Gemayel, has repudiated his agreements with the Israelis and closed down the informal liaison office (i.e., embassy) there. The Soviet Union has replaced Syrian equipment damaged in the war, deployed thousands of advisers in Syria, and improved Syrian air defenses with the long-range SA-5 missile system. As Schiff and Ya'ari point out, the Syrian armed forces came away relatively optimistic about their ability to meet the Israelis on equal terms on the ground if they could ever find a way of neutralizing Israeli air superiority. The clash also removed the cover of secrecy from those areas of Israeli military capability (in electronic warfare, for example) which might have been decisive in a more serious war.

On the other hand, the Israelis have achieved a number of important goals, some unforeseen, others part of Sharon's original plan. They currently occupy an extremely favorable military line, particularly in the Jebel Baruk, which overlooks the Bekaa and provides unequaled positions for modern surveillance and monitoring equipment. Israeli observers note that, once again, the Syrians have been remarkably scrupulous in observing the cease-fire lines. In place of Israel's unrealistic reliance on the Phalange, it now has working arrangements with independent Christian groups, some Shi'ites, and the Druse, ferocious fighters who are fundamentally anti-Syrian even when tactically allied with them.

Israel's northern towns are again quiet. Civilians have returned to their homes, and the threat of a semi-deserted north has been ended. PLO forces still exist—they were never quite rooted out of Beirut, where the Israelis estimate they left behind some 2,000 fighters—but they are dispersed, poorly equipped, and divided among themselves. When the Israelis manage to extricate themselves from a frustrating and embittered occupation, it is highly unlikely that the local population, no matter how anti-Israel, will again tolerate Palestinian predominance.

This points to the most important consequence of Peace for Galilee, the shattering of the PLO mini-state. For the first time since 1948, there is no border area contiguous with Israel from which bands of terrorists can operate. Nor is there any area (like the refugee camps in Jordan until 1970, or the Lebanese camps—small cities, really—thereafter) in which the Palestinians can create a crypto-state. This is not necessarily fatal to the PLO, which started, after all, in 1964 as an organization created and controlled by Nasser of Egypt. Nonetheless, the destruction of the PLO mini-state has profound implications for Palestinian politics in the West Bank, Jordan, and the Palestinian diaspora, for it has dealt a severe and possibly crippling blow to Palestinian hopes for "liberation" by armed struggle. Not only has the façade of Palestinian military power been swept aside; the independence required to create such power has been destroyed and, it would appear, permanently so. To make matters even more decisive, the war triggered the most bloody and bitter internecine battles in Palestinian history, further fragmenting and discrediting the PLO.

FINALLY, Peace for Galilee and its aftermath, including the ill-fated American Marine presence in Lebanon, brought about a new and closer relationship between the United States and Israel. Here is the last and greatest of ironies, for American-Israeli relations were never worse than when Israeli troops were besieging Beirut and later when, on one or two occasions, American Marines found themselves pointing their weapons at IDF patrols in that devastated city. And yet, Israel's victory over Soviet-equipped Syrian forces both demonstrated the quality of American equipment and provided new technical data for improving it further. The tragedy of the Beirut bombing of the Marine barracks brought home to American statesmen the ferocity of Syria; its aftermath (including the outcry over the failure to use Israeli hospitals and rubble-removal equipment) revealed Israel's value as a strategic *place d'armes* in the Middle East.

American-Israeli strategic cooperation—once stymied by senior leaders in the Pentagon and an Israeli government that under Begin and Sharon was abrasive and obstreperous—has begun to take root. As Soviet military power grows, as Greece shows itself a far from reliable ally, and as it becomes apparent that an overall Arab-Israeli settlement may be not merely less feasible but less critical than once thought, the logic of an American-Israeli alliance grows. In 1970 the United States prepared to provide air cover for an Israeli operation to save King Hussein from a Syrian invasion. Today, Israeli airpower can help protect the Sixth Fleet, and its medical and port facilities can support it. The extraordinarily sophisticated armament industry of Israel and its combat-tested forces can—and do—supply the United States with valuable data (and captured enemy equipment) for the technological competition with the Soviet Union.

In consequence of all this, should Israel be able to withdraw from southern Lebanon, as almost all Israelis wish, it may be far better off with respect to external security than at any time since independence. How such a withdrawal can be effected without creating a violent power vacuum north of the Litani remains to be seen. In any event, whether the *internal* cost was worth the benefits of Peace for Galilee is a matter only the embattled Israelis themselves can decide.

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Infanticide & Its Apologists

Mary Tedeschi

THE killing of unwanted babies, commonly known as infanticide, is back in fashion. Few commentators have admitted as much, and few reporters have encouraged them to do so. The journalism on infanticide is rife with error: falsehoods reported as facts, facts not reported at all, and the sacrifice of fact to euphemism. The case of Baby Doe provides examples of all three.

Baby Doe was born in Bloomington, Indiana, on April 6, 1982, with two defects. One was Down's Syndrome, a chromosomal disorder leading to mental retardation. The other was a malformed esophagus which required surgery so that food could reach the baby's stomach; the success rate for this operation is 85-90 percent. After conferring with their obstetrician, Dr. Walter Owens, Baby Doe's parents decided against the operation and against intravenous feedings. When hospital administrators learned of the parents' decision, they sought a judicial opinion. The following evening, Superior Court Judge John G. Baker held an emergency hearing.

In another hearing, Bobby and Shirley Wright, the parents of a daughter with Down's Syndrome, offered to adopt Baby Doe, arguing that he had been neglected and abandoned. The attorney for Baby Doe's parents argued that, far from neglecting their child, the parents Doe were following the course of treatment prescribed by their physician (which was to deny him food and water); and that, since Baby Doe was potentially retarded, his life did not warrant preservation anyway. This last claim was buttressed by Dr. Owens, who testified: "Some of these children . . . are mere blobs. . . . These children are quite incapable of telling us what they feel, and what they sense, and so on."

Judge Baker ruled for the parents of Baby Doe, and the infant died of starvation that evening.

The media's errors in reporting the case began with accounts of the "severely retarded baby" born with Down's Syndrome. Few seemed to know that, on the contrary, there was no way of telling at birth how retarded Baby Doe would be. The IQ's of people with Down's Syndrome range between 25 and 60, with a few reaching into the category of normal intelligence. Thus, the "fact" that Baby Doe would be "severely retarded," a phrase that continues to appear in more recent accounts of the case, was simply wrong.

Errors of omission also abounded. Few reporters or commentators mentioned the success rate for the esophagal surgery; Dr. Owens's chilling remarks on the stand; the Orwellian argument by the attorney for Baby Doe's parents that starvation is a legitimate course of medical treatment; or that there is a waiting list for the adoption of children with Down's Syndrome. NBC News, to its credit, did report that it had received fifty phone calls from parents offering to adopt Baby Doe; for the most part, however, the significance of this was lost on the commentators.

In addition, those who followed mainstream accounts were spared the gruesome observations of doctors and nurses who watched the baby die of starvation. These and other pertinent facts were obscured in a flurry of euphemism, including an editorial in the Washington *Post* on "The Demise of Infant Doe." (This was only the beginning of the *Post*'s distinguished record of opinion on infanticide. In pained approval of the Indiana court's decision, *Post* columnist Richard Cohen wrote that "Two things have died—a baby named Infant Doe, and a belief in absolutes. We have all grown up.")

Considering the accounts of Baby Doe that appeared in the media, it was astonishing that there should have been an uproar over his death. Yet Judge Baker's decision was denounced by many, including the New York *Times*. The *Times*, however, was soon to join hands with the *Post*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and countless other guardians of opinion who followed their lead in the second of the Doe cases, that of Baby Jane of Long Island.

BABY JANE DOE was born on October 11, 1983, with spina bifida, an open spinal column; and with hydrocephalus, excessive fluid surrounding the brain. She needed two operations immediately, both of them routine: one to close her spine and prevent infection, another to install a shunt to drain fluid from her brain. As Dr. George Newman, the physician who advised Baby Jane's parents to withhold treatment, noted on her medical record, with the first of these operations "the prognosis was for probable . . . walking with bracing." The second operation, installation of a shunt, was needed to prevent brain damage

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from hydrocephalus. As Dr. Newman himself later testified, no one knew whether Baby Jane Doe had been born mentally retarded. Nevertheless, her parents followed Dr. Newman's advice and refused permission for both operations.

These medical facts about Baby Jane Doe emerged during the hearings held on her behalf. They will come as a surprise to those who remember media accounts of her case, for as Nat Hentoff has documented in a series of columns for the *Village Voice*, several major errors found their way into nearly all the articles and editorials written about Baby Jane.

For one, the New York *Times*, among others, reported that "With the surgery she could live up to twenty years." Steven Baer, in *National Right to Life News*, has traced this error to New York State Supreme Court Justice Melvyn Tanenbaum, who included it in his oral summary of the testimony at the hearings. In fact, however, not even Dr. Newman had been so pessimistic. When asked how long the child might live after surgery, he replied: "There is really no way of placing a limit on it if the surgery is performed." The cross-examiner then asked, "Could it conceivably be twenty years?" Newman responded, "Twenty years is possible." The reporters, relying only on Justice Tanenbaum's summary of the testimony, promptly gave Baby Jane a maximum life expectancy of twenty years, and commentators throughout the country repeated this mistake.

There was also the problem of her "abnormally small head," which measured 31 centimeters in circumference. This "abnormality" was in fact denied by Dr. Newman's superior, Dr. Albert Butler, who also favored the parents' decision but testified that 31 centimeters were "within normal measurements for a baby of that size." Indeed, the consternation over Baby Jane's "abnormally small head" was deeply ironic; after all, it was the condition of hydrocephalus—an abnormally *enlarged* head—that was supposed to account for her allegedly "severe retardation." According to Dr. David McClone, chief of Pediatric Neurosurgery at Chicago Children's Memorial Hospital (who has himself treated over 1,000 patients with spina bifida), babies with spina bifida whose head circumference is in the range of 31 centimeters are among "the very brightest." He added: "It's the child who has the extremely large head who is at risk for having decreased intellectual development. It's actually backwards."

A third example making the rounds, and one compounding an error of fact with euphemism, was that Baby Jane was only being denied "life-prolonging" treatment. The truth was that without the surgery to close her spine, the baby would not live out even the twenty years that the media had, albeit erroneously, allotted her; most spina-bifida children who do not receive surgery to close their spines die before they are two years old and suffer throughout from severe infections. But "life-prolonging" proved such a useful phrase that it found its way into the pages of the New York *Post*, the *Daily News*, *USA Today*, and *Time*, for example, and onto the screen with Lesley Stahl (CBS), Tom Brokaw (NBC), Peter Jennings (ABC), and Ted Koppel (ABC's *Nightline*). Thus, an operation that would have saved a child's life became universally misrepresented as a pointless exercise in medical expertise.

And so, day by day, Baby Jane's defects were made worse in the media than they ever were made in the womb. Most accounts of her case (and here one must except *Newsday*, which from the beginning emphasized the evidence for an optimistic prognosis) were shot through with these and other errors, and the few journalists who pointed out as much were ignored.

BUT the recent vogue of advocating infanticide has taken subtler forms than it did in the eager pessimism that surfaced in the commentary on Baby Jane Doe. Consider *The Long Dying of Baby Andrew*.* The authors of this book, Robert and Peggy Stinson, were the parents of a boy named Andrew, who was born just before Christmas in 1976. Nearly sixteen weeks premature, Andrew weighed 1 pound, 12 ounces at birth and suffered from numerous disorders, including apnea (interrupted breathing), rickets, sepsis (an infection in the bloodstream), difficulty in taking nutrition, a possible heart defect, and several iatrogenic (or treatment-induced) problems, such as a cleft palate caused by the presence of a breathing tube. The baby died after six months of intensive treatment. *The Long Dying of Baby Andrew*, which grew out of an article published in the *Atlantic*, consists of the journals that his parents kept throughout Andrew's short life.

Although one reviewer had qualms about the Stinsons' inability to "see other points of view," all praised the authors for their honesty and courage, and focused on their sensitive portrayal of a family tragedy. To be sure, it would have been possible for the parents of a baby like Andrew to write a heartrending account of the sufferings that they and their child endured. But *The Long Dying of Baby Andrew* is no such book.

Andrew's parents assumed, and indeed hoped, that he would die shortly after birth. Instead, the baby lived and was transferred to another hospital that specialized in intensive care for premature infants. For the Stinsons, the tragedy began when they realized that Andrew's new doctors had no intention of encouraging their son to die. What followed was a bitter war, waged throughout Andrew's life, between his parents and the medical "establishment." The latter's view of the matter can be summarized in a remark made by one of Andrew's doctors and repeated by the Stinsons throughout the book: "What do you want me to do? Put a pillow over his head?"

* Little, Brown, 375 pp., $16.50.

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For Andrew was living—and living, moreover, with no conclusive evidence that he had suffered brain damage or even that, if he survived the initial months of intensive care, he would endure any serious physical handicap. These are two rather pertinent facts that the book's reviewers neglected to mention, and there are others, also supplied by the Stinsons. For one of the most astonishing features of their book is that it includes such medical reports as the following, co-signed by two of Andrew's doctors when the baby was four months old:

> Parents are highly intelligent, argumentative & Hostile as well as Fragile emotionally—both are under Psychiatric care & are seeing a marriage counseler as a result of their experience with Andrew.
>
> When placenta previa [an improperly situated placenta] was Dx [diagnosed] the parents decided they would rather have an abortion than risk having a damaged child. However, gestation was too far advanced for abortion. The turmoil created by this decision was Cx [complicated] by the onset of premature labor & delivery of an 800-gram fetus. Not to worry tho. The parents were assured by the obstetrician that the child would die & everyone would be happy. Andrew however refused to die & when apnea intervened the parents were asked to transfer the child to PHC [Pediatric Hospital Center]. Initially they refused saying they only wished the child to be made comfortable. After a time however they relented & the child was taken to PHC. . . .
>
> It has been very difficult taking care of a child so many people hope will die & who is at such high risk of having severe neurologic damage. However—
>
> *Each of his many problems are potentially reversible* [emphasis added]. . . .
>
> Addendum—In my opinion Andrew is at high risk of being battered if he ever goes home with his parents.

Obviously, it did not occur to the Stinsons—or, for that matter, to the book's reviewers—that these reports would reveal anything but the profound insensitivity of Andrew's doctors. Yet this excerpt, like entries by other doctors whom the Stinsons had castigated for keeping their son alive, is a fairer summary of the facts and tone of the Stinsons' story than any of their admirers has seen fit to give. Almost none thought it pertinent to mention, for example, that Mrs. Stinson could not bring herself to touch or even visit her son for most of his life, because, as she puts it, "I can't face the nurses, this month's doctor-stranger—the people who know all about our marriage and our finances and understand nothing about *me*." So too, her recurring fear that Andrew's doctors might be Catholics or Orthodox Jews, and so might have an "ideology" at stake in preserving his life, appears to have gone unnoticed.

But most reviewers had higher purposes in mind than describing what they had in fact read. Peter Singer and Helga Kuhse, whose essay on the Stinsons' book was featured as the lead piece on the cover of the March 1 issue of the *New York Review of Books*, provided an excellent example of the political goals to be served by ignoring the tragedy of Andrew himself. They also gave us a glimpse into yet another dimension of the misrepresentation of infanticide: the role of the "ethicists," or, as Nat Hentoff has called them, the "multidisciplinarians of death."

Singer and Kuhse's essay is an attack on the Reagan administration for attempting to enforce section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The section stipulates that it is unlawful for hospitals receiving federal funds to withhold "nutritional sustenance or medical or surgical treatment required to correct a life-threatening condition" if the withholding is based on the fact that the patient is handicapped. This regulation, Singer and Kuhse charge, interferes with "family decisions in that most tragic, personal, and delicate of situations, the birth of a severely handicapped infant."

En route to their argument, the authors recite the usual chorus of errors, calling the chances for Baby Doe's surgery "fair" (they were 85-90 percent), and portraying Baby Jane Doe as a "lifetime burden" and "severely handicapped child" with "no reasonable prospect of a satisfying life." But Singer and Kuhse are after bigger game than these two infants; they mount nothing less than an attack on the very principle that all lives have equal worth. However it is reached, their conclusion is clear:

> The pro-life groups were right about one thing: the location of the baby inside or outside the womb cannot make such a moral difference. We cannot coherently hold that it is all right to kill a fetus a week before birth, but as soon as the baby is born everything must be done to keep it alive. The solution, however, is not to accept the pro-life view that the fetus is a human being with the same moral status as yours or mine. The solution is the very opposite: to abandon the idea that all human life is of equal worth.

As an example of Peter Singer's writings on infanticide, this passage is in fact considerably restrained. A less fettered version of his thought, "Commentaries: Sanctity of Life or Quality," appeared in 1983 in *Pediatrics*, the respected journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics. There, in defending the Indiana's court's decision to allow Baby Doe to starve, Singer wrote:

> If we compare a severely defective human infant with a non-human animal, a dog or a pig, for example, we will often find the non-human to have superior capacities, both actual and potential, for rationality, self-consciousness, communication, and anything else that might be considered morally significant. Only the fact that the defective infant is a member of the species Homo sapiens leads it to be treated differently from the dog or pig. . . . Humans who bestow superior value on the lives of all human beings solely because they are members of our own

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> species, are judging along lines strikingly similar to those used by white racists who bestow superior value on the lives of other whites, merely because they are members of their own race.

And still earlier, in his book *Practical Ethics*, published in 1977 by Oxford University Press, Singer suggested that "If there were to be legislation in this matter, it probably should deny a full legal right to life to babies only for a short period after birth—perhaps a month."

Singer is only one of many "ethicists" who have gained entry to prestigious publications by advocating infanticide. In 1977, for example, the *Hastings Center Report* carried an article by Anthony Shaw, a pediatric surgeon who introduced new rigor to the practice of infanticide by developing a mathematical formula to determine which handicapped infants should be allowed to live. The formula, QL = NE × (H + S)—that is, "quality of life" equals "natural endowment" multiplied by "contribution of the home" plus "contribution of society"—was a theoretical breakthrough. That year, a team of physicians at Oklahoma Children's Hospital began testing Shaw's equation on babies born with spina bifida. Their experiment, which lasted until 1982, was a resounding success. All of the 24 babies who, with their parents' consent, had been singled out for death had obligingly died. Equally reassuring, the 36 whom the physicians had decided to treat had lived (though one died in an auto crash).

When the medical team published these results in the October 1983 issue of *Pediatrics*, it turned out that not everyone was as pleased with the experiment that had been undertaken at the Oklahoma Children's Hospital as the physicians had been. In particular, the criteria employed—such as the parents' intellectual and financial resources, the infants' potential to live without a wheelchair, suspected mental retardation, and the availability of social services—were immediately attacked by the program's antagonists. (What must have been the unkindest cut of all came in February of this year, when, as Carlton Sherwood discovered and reported to the Washington *Times*, the Oklahoma Children's Shelter—in which those selected for non-treatment had spent their last days—was closed by state officials for numerous health and safety violations. Its owners were meanwhile charged in a $47-million civil suit with racketeering and fraud.)

THE literature on infanticide has also benefited from the ideas of Drs. Raymond Duff and A.G.M. Campbell, who together or separately have aired their opinions in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the *Journal of Medical Ethics*, *Pediatrics*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, and numerous anthologies devoted to medical ethics.

In 1970, Drs. Duff and Campbell began practicing their own version of "selective non-treatment" on babies at the Yale-New Haven Hospital. Within thirty months, 46 of the infants they had decided not to treat had died. The criteria by which these infants were hastened to the grave included assessments of their ability to "love or be loved," the likelihood of institutionalization, and the sorrow of their parents. These criteria, as Drs. Duff and Campbell emphasized, were intended not only for cases as extreme as anencephaly (total or partial absence of the brain), but also for "borderline" disorders such as spina bifida, Down's Syndrome, or multiple defects that might or might not involve the brain. While the doctors have acknowledged that "death as a management option" might be illegal, they add that "If working out these dilemmas in ways such as we suggest is in violation of the law, we believe the law should be changed."

It should not be supposed that advocates of infanticide are limited to the world of medicine. Most students of analytic philosophy, for example, are acquainted with *The Rights and Wrongs of Abortion*, a collection of essays published in 1974 by Princeton University Press after first appearing in the journal *Philosophy and Public Affairs*. Among the contributors is Michael J. Tooley, whose "Abortion and Infanticide" prefigures the work of Peter Singer. Tooley begins with the observation that advocates of abortion must "come to grips" with the issue of infanticide, in part for reasons of consistency, and in part because "if it could be shown that there is no moral objection to infanticide the happiness of society could be significantly increased." As for distinguishing between infanticide and murder:

> The practical moral problem can . . . be satisfactorily resolved by choosing some period of time, such as a week after birth, as the interval during which infanticide will be permitted. This interval could then be modified once psychologists have established the point at which a human organism comes to believe that it is a continuing subject of experiences and other mental states.

Singling out the views of men like Singer, Shaw, Duff, Campbell, and Tooley may seem an unfair way of assessing the state of medical ethics. It is not. Only a few physicians such as Dr. C. Everett Koop (now Surgeon General) and a few moral philosophers like Paul Ramsey have denounced the views of their colleagues, and they have had little effect. Dr. Koop, in particular, has been pilloried in the press for his association with the Right-to-Life movement. Though they quibble over exactly which children should live or die, most "ethicists" differ from a Singer, a Shaw, or a Tooley only in being less candid, or less rigorous, in their support of infanticide.

Yet the ideas of these "ethicists" are scarcely known outside the elite circles in which their writtings appear. The story of the Oklahoma Children's Hospital did not become a national tragedy, and neither did the experiments conducted in

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New Haven under Drs. Campbell and Duff. In other words, the media's handling of the Baby Doe cases was merely typical. Newspapers and magazines, erudite journals, philosophical and medical societies—in sum, a fair sampling of the American intellectual elite—have misrepresented or kept silent about the advocacy and practice of infanticide. By now, the reasons for this have become clear.

BABY DOE died in April 1982—in the middle, that is, of Ronald Reagan's term in office. Three weeks later, Reagan sent a memo to Richard Schweiker, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), instructing him to notify hospitals of the contents of section 504. It was this memo that sparked a heated debate in the media over the government's "intrusiveness" into private affairs. That debate, which intensified when HHS began posting the provisions of section 504 in hospitals throughout the country, reached its peak when the federal government tried to obtain the medical records of Baby Jane Doe.

Commentators portrayed the issue as a conflict between state and private control. In so doing, they attracted the support of those who, while ordinarily sympathetic to Reagan, would come to fault him for violating his commitment to limited government. But in general the Baby Doe cases served as a pretext for liberal elites to attack a popular Republican administration. Thus, two other pertinent facts—that section 504 was part of an Act passed in 1973, and that Reagan's was not the first administration to attempt to enforce the section's provisions—were rarely mentioned, and never emphasized.

Yet if the political aim of attacking the Reagan administration partially explains the numerous errors and examples of worst-case thinking that dominated accounts of the Baby Does, what remains to be explained is why these same elites drew a curtain of silence around the subject of infanticide.

In considering this question, it is useful to recall that the literature on infanticide is rife with references to abortion, and that the open advocacy of infanticide began in the early 1970's with the legalization of abortion-on-demand. For as Singer and Tooley suggest, it is difficult to justify abortion without at least considering what such a position implies about infanticide. After all, as many "ethicists" have themselves pointed out, an infant's physiology throughout his first month of life is closer to that of a fetus than it is to that of a child.

The theoretical difficulty of distinguishing between abortion and infanticide becomes even more obvious as advances in technology have forced the redefinition of fetal "viability." The definition offered in *Roe* v. *Wade*, for example—28 weeks—is already obsolete; as the Stinsons rightly observe, there was something absurd in protecting Andrew's emergence from the womb after less than six months of gestation when as a fetus he could legally have been aborted at an even later date.

Thus, infanticide presents the champions of abortion-on-demand with an uncomfortable choice. They can either describe events that seem increasingly arbitrary—like "viability" or birth—as the points at which a fetus or baby obtains its rights, or they can allow, as the more outspoken "ethicists" already have done, that infanticide, or at least certain instances of it, is as justifiable as abortion. Peter Singer frankly admits that he would rather approve infanticide than deny abortion. By contrast, the overwhelmingly liberal members of the media—90 percent of whom, according to a study by Stanley Rothman and Robert Lichter, favor abortion-on-demand—have managed to evade the alternatives by misrepresenting some cases of infanticide and by muting or ignoring others.

In the end, however, these disparate explanations do not satisfy, for they mask what is most unique about the American revival of a pagan practice. Not that the advocates of infanticide ignore its distinguished roots; on the contrary, as Singer has written, and as many have implied, "It is not easy to feel confident that we are more civilized than the best Greek and Roman moralists." But the new infanticide differs from the old in this crucial respect: it has added another class of infants—those born with real or suspected mental retardation—to the ranks of the defective. Plato and Aristotle have finally been outdone.

It should come as no surprise that advocates of the new infanticide appear and are rewarded in the uppermost circles of the intellectual elite. Those who live by their wits have frequently doubted the value of a life without them. Take Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who in 1926 spoke for the majority of the Supreme Court in a decision that upheld the right of Virginia to sterilize the feeble-minded: "It is better for all the world, if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crime, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit from continuing their kind." He added: "Three generations of idiots are enough"—a fillip that should find some favor with our utilitarian advocates of infanticide.

In Holmes's time, before high technology, only a few mental defectives could be singled out at birth. Now we can find the rest. Of course, like any other discipline, the new infanticide must allow for error, as it evidently did when (as Carlton Sherwood and Mike Taibbi reported in their television documentary *Death in the Nursery*) a premature infant was allowed to die because his neurosurgeon diagnosed anencephaly, only to have the subsequent autopsy reveal a perfectly formed brain. But advances in technology will surely reduce such mistakes; in the meantime, the apologists for the new infanticide might prefer to do without autopsies.

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A Taste for Dostoevsky

Lionel Abel

I AM rather sure that I was not the only member of my generation (which came of age during the early 30's) to have felt especially rewarded in coming, suddenly, on the novels of Dostoevsky. But for what were we being rewarded? What direction of thought had we already taken which made our discovery of his novels the confirmation of some judgment already forming in us? As I look back, it seems to me that what I find my own experience to have been, I can assume some others to have had.

Now, what I realized on my first reading of *The Brothers Karamazov*—in 1931 or '32—was that here was the model for a kind of narrative writing that was of the highest seriousness, and yet without any trace of moralism: moreover, it was not aesthetically distanced from lived experience as were the novels of Flaubert, or the *Ulysses* of James Joyce. While there were some real innovations of form in Dostoevsky's great novel, the intent of the novelist was clearly not to be innovative without some larger purpose than invention for its own sake. Whatever this novelist invented, it appeared, had been required for the clarity and meaning of the story he was telling; never had his purpose been to exhibit his skill as a storyteller. Thus, Dostoevsky was able to represent to one who read him in the 30's an escape from the other two possibilities for narrative art which past literature offered as paradigms—the novels with a moral bent of Tolstoy and of Zola on the one hand, and the novels of Flaubert and Joyce, exalting the aesthetic, on the other.

Was it the same interest which led André Gide, of an earlier generation (he, like us, had a period of pro-Communism), to admire Dostoevsky and to devote to him one of the best works yet written on the Russian novelist? Here I am not at all sure. What can be said, though, is that Dostoevsky strongly influenced Gide, so that the latter's novel, *The Counterfeiters,* is a refined version of Dostoevsky's narrative style. In fact, the style of *The Counterfeiters* is so perfected that I would go so far as to say it is the *right* style for any modern novel involving a highly charged dramatic action. For that I would put the style of this novel above the styles of Céline, Faulkner, or Camus. Unfortunately, Gide was not able to present characters sufficiently driven by passion or an intrigue plausible and exciting enough to make a real masterpiece of what he termed his first and only novel.

It is interesting to note, too, that the style Gide was able to envision as a result of reading Dostoevsky so dazzled and so blinded him that he was unable to see the real virtues of the impressionistic and complex style of Proust, and turned down *Remembrance of Things Past* when it was offered to him as editor of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Proust, for his part, had a great understanding of Dostoevsky's art, although his own novel is addressed entirely to the remembrance of past events and is most unlike Dostoevsky's highly dramatic novels, the plots of which, never determined in advance, carry us into the future acts of hurtfully colliding characters. So if Gide was drawn to Dostoevsky for the same reasons that members of my generation were, Proust, we may suppose, admired Dostoevsky for reasons quite his own.

Since I have made a point of the special appeal Dostoevsky had to members of my generation, I must instance the response to him of someone other than myself. The late Harold Rosenberg comes immediately to mind. During the 30's he talked brilliantly of Dostoevsky, and I heard much about the brilliance of his lectures on Dostoevsky during the late 60's and early 70's at the University of Chicago. On the other hand, the only essay we have by him on the work of Dostoevsky, written in the late 60's, is rather pedestrian, and shows little of the forcefulness of the views he expressed in conversation during the 30's; it appears as an introduction to a new translation of *The Idiot* by Henry and Olga Carlisle. By the time he came to write this piece, Rosenberg had begun to consult the opinions of his audience in formulating his own. This had not been a handicap to his art criticism, but it was hardly proper in judging a writer like Dostoevsky.

In any case, the biases of the period infected Rosenberg's introduction. In the plays of the 60's,

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the audience was often brought up on the stage: thus, according to Rosenberg, this was what was happening in *The Idiot*. Dostoevsky's hero, Myshkin, Rosenberg called a spectator of the action. On the contrary, he is the most active figure in the novel, as he would have to be, given the fact that he represents Christian love. For the Christian is defined spiritually by the *activity* to which his faith commits him. Necessarily, Rosenberg had to suggest that Dostoevsky was rather less religious than others have taken him to be. Finally, Rosenberg called Myshkin "sick," no doubt in deference to the Freudian view, then widely held, and of which I shall have something more to say later.

NOR is there anything to praise in the writings of the late Philip Rahv, also of my generation, on Dostoevsky. The pieces he wrote on *The Possessed* and *The Brothers Karamazov* in *Partisan Review,* and the essay on Dostoevsky he did for the *New York Review of Books* during the 60's, are ponderous, politically motivated, and unilluminating. In his *New York Review of Books* piece, Rahv disputed the claim that has been made by Russian critics that Dostoevsky was something of a philosopher, arguing that Russians have not been very good at philosophy. Now, of course, there has not been a Russian contribution to cognitive thought comparable to those made by Descartes, Hume, or Kant; nevertheless, in the discussion of alternative views of life, such as we find in Dostoevsky's novels—this gives us the right to call the novelist *philosophical*—Russians have thought, in whatever genre, as deeply as any other people of Europe.

During the 70's when I was still teaching at the State University of New York at Buffalo, I decided to give a course on Dostoevsky's novels, and I expected to have my students read the essays of Rosenberg and of Rahv, but when I reread these pieces, I was deeply disappointed by them, and was unable to recommend them to my students. The only critical writings on Dostoevsky that I found clarifying were the articles by Joseph Frank on *Notes from Underground* and *The Possessed,* which had just appeared in various magazines.

These essays were advance notices of the great work on Dostoevsky Joseph Frank was beginning to put together. We now have the first two volumes.* These are beautiful books, and deserve better than what even the most enthusiastic reviewers have thus far said of them. Frank's work has been called a biography, but it is much more than that. It is a careful setting of the events of Dostoevsky's life and the books he wrote within the cultural conflicts which took place in Russia in the middle of the 19th century.

Frank's work has been compared to Walter Jackson Bate's biography of John Keats and to Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce*, but the comparison is not at all apt. These books were fine and graceful works, but they involved no serious thought about ideology, theology, or social theory. Frank, in his books, has had to resolve any number of problematic issues, and he has done so with a quiet tact and authority that call for the very highest praise. Such questions as the basis for a Freudian interpretation of Dostoevsky's writings and character, questions as to the writer's religiosity, his views on socialism and revolution in his youth, and of czarism as a mature man, his attitude toward nationalism, Catholicism, Greek Orthodoxy, toward the peasants before and after he became aware of their alienation from and hostility to him—all these and many other questions are handled with the greatest care and with a satisfying clarity. Frank even discusses the particular kind of epilepsy Dostoevsky was afflicted with, and in terms of the latest medical, as well as literary, scholarship. The only works which I think can be compared to Frank's *Dostoevsky* are *Tolstoy in the Sixties* and *Tolstoy in the Seventies,* by the Russian critic Boris Eichenbaum. These great books are also not properly designated when called biographies, and Joseph Frank tells me that they set the standard by which he has tried to judge his own accomplishment.

IT MAY be asked: were there not other models of narrative writing for my generation besides those provided by moralists and aesthetes? What about the plays of Bernard Shaw, so highly charged ideologically, so extraordinary, and so deft? And behind Shaw there was of course the even greater figure of Voltaire. Yet somehow the very success of these writers, who had so perfected their peculiar skills, made them unserviceable to us as models during the 30's. We felt that their modes of expression, based on talents we did not have, had already served, and in that sense could not serve us. We simply could not fight off the appeal of aesthetic innovators like Joyce and Flaubert by following the example set by writers like Voltaire and Shaw.

And there was something else, too, at issue here. We noticed, for example, that in Shaw's plays, all the characters were perfectly logical and yet nobody was ever refuted. This made us think that Shaw's world was not quite real. What we wanted were literary works in which a refutation of some of the characters was really possible. Without such a refutation, how could we send anyone, even in imagination, before a firing squad? And in the 30's this is what we desired: to be able to send

* Volume I: *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849;* Volume II: *Dostoevsky: The Years of Ordeal, 1850-1859,* Princeton University Press, Volume I (1976), 401 pp., $36.00; Volume II (1984), 320 pp., $25.00.

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someone refuted before a firing squad, at least in print.

Then why did those of us who did write about Dostoevsky write so poorly about him, Rahv so portentously, and so emptily, Rosenberg with so little of the wit and insight which graced his commentary on art and politics? I think the mistake made by them, and by me, for I had a share in it too, though I did not write the bad pieces they did, was this: we thought that Dostoevsky had expressed a political philosophy. Yet what is true of him is what the late Leo Strauss in his last book, *Studies in Platonic Political Philosophy,* said of Nietzsche and Heidegger. He claimed they supported the gods and the poets, and were *against* political philosophy.

There are not a few who may find it hard to believe that Dostoevsky can be properly classed with writers who were *against* political philosophy. After all, he had been a member of the Petrashevsky group; he was sentenced first to death and then to ten years of exile for subversive activity. And he defended himself stoutly against the czar's interrogators. Returned from Siberia, he did change his view of the Russian government. He came to support the czar, and the liberals of that period called him a reactionary. Some of our contemporary liberals and radicals still do. So in what sense can I say of him what Leo Strauss said of Heidegger and Nietzsche? Can one indeed say of Dostoevsky that he was with the gods—or at least the Christian God—and the poets, and *against* political philosophy?

Now, it is one thing to support a legitimate government and be critical of its critics, and quite another to present a program for reforming that government or for preventing its reform. It is only in connection with some program of either of these kinds that one can speak of a "political philosophy." In Dostoevsky's novels and stories no program of either sort is promulgated, or if one is, it is only for the purpose of ridiculing it, as in the famous proposal of Shigalov for creating a wholly free society every single member of which was to be a spy. So while it would be quite right to say of Dostoevsky that he was politically conservative, it is simply false to say that he was reactionary, and one may be conservative without upholding or being in opposition to any kind of philosophy that is based fundamentally on politics. Dostoevsky's beliefs after his conversion in Siberia were religious, but with a dash of nationalism. But even Dostoevsky's nationalism is not truly seen when its politics is made too emphatic. Dostoevsky's nationalism, I should say, has more to do with the poets and saints of Russia than with its bureaucrats or czars.

We were drawn to Dostoevsky because his novels dealt with life at its most serious moments, in its most profound aspects. But there was something else that drew us to him. To explain this particular attraction I must first note a remark of Joseph Frank about Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* in an article Frank published some years ago in the French review *Critique,* and which will no doubt be included in one of the future volumes of his work. Here Frank compares Dostoevsky's story to a *conte philosophique,* a philosophical tale, of the kind perfected by Voltaire. However, *Notes from Underground* is in one way not at all like the tales told by Voltaire, though it is in a very important way philosophical. What makes it different from the *conte philosophique* is that in even the very best of these, there is little attention to character or characterization. The portraits of Candide and of Dr. Pangloss are the sketches of a caricaturist interested in his design, not in the elements that enter into it. But in Dostoevsky's story the characters are presented in depth, they have the author's fullest interest.

Dostoevsky has been called an ideological writer, and so he is, maybe even the greatest of ideological writers. But there is no other like him, for ideological writers in general do not have the interest that Dostoevsky had in character. This, too, is what drew us to Dostoevsky. It has been said that there is a conflict between plot and character. And so there is. There are masters of plot who cannot convince us of the reality of those entangled in their consummate scheming, and there are masters of characterization who cannot fit their realized characters into a dramatic scheme of any kind. However, the very greatest novelists and dramatists overcome the difficulties of inserting a real character into a plausible plot. For that we did not require the art of Dostoevsky. He faced quite another difficulty: that of being an ideological writer while protecting his characters from an ideological judgment that would reduce them to caricatural sketchiness. It was the depth of Dostoevsky's creation of characters inserted into a highly ideological world that attracted us during the 30's and made us think we had found a writer whose achievement we could pit against the masterpieces of modernist aestheticism.

So far I have dealt with what the word *conte* may mean in relation to Dostoevsky. But what about the term *philosophique*? In what sense are Dostoevsky's novels philosophical?

Certainly they are not philosophical in the sense modern philosophy has tried to be what Edmund Husserl required it to be: a rigorous science. In making this demand Husserl pointed out that philosophy would have to give up any effort to describe a view of life as a whole, aiming at achieving wisdom. The modern philosopher, to be competent, had to give up the hope of being wise, and in this sense I think all of contemporary philosophy that is interesting has been in line with Husserl's judgment.

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But the other part of philosophy, that part which past philosophers of other periods have included in their quest for rigor, that part which aimed at wisdom, is the part of philosophy we encounter in Dostoevsky's novels, in those of his characters who generalize their experience and justify these generalizations. Many of Dostoevsky's characters represent views of life carried to a dramatic extreme, and the testing of the character in his encounters with others is also a testing of his extreme view, as of theirs. Views of life in pitched battle: that is not an unfair description of what occurs in one of Dostoevsky's stories or novels, and these battles are battles in which life is at risk as well as the coherence of one's judgment. These are battles for ideas which may eventuate in life or in death.

To be sure, there are other writers who have presented characters embodying different world views. Certainly Shylock has a different world view from his antagonist Antonio, the merchant of Venice, and being a Jew, has a different religion from that of Portia, who invokes Christian mercy in judging between Shylock and Antonio. And once again, surely there is a difference of world views between Othello, whom Wyndham Lewis called a "feudal lion," and Iago, called by the same writer a "bourgeois fox." One can easily multiply the instances of characters in our literature who embody different views of life or of the world. But let us just remain with the two instances I have just given, and contrast what Shakespeare does in each case with what Dostoevsky does, in pitting one character embodying one view against another, with a contrasting or alternative view of the world. I shall take the second instance, from Shakespeare, first.

In *Othello* Shakespeare never tries to refute Iago's view of the world, but merely manages, by a circumstance which may well seem implausible, to catch Iago out and send him off to torture and execution. Iago is defeated, Shakespeare sees to that, but Iago is never convinced that his view of life is wrong. Strikingly different is what Dostoevsky does with his protagonist Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. Raskolnikov, after his crime, comes to recognize that the view of life which he held in committing it was a false one, and voluntarily accedes to being punished for it. Let me put the difference in this way: Iago is partly defeated in his effort, in part he succeeds in it; Raskolnikov is not defeated but refuted, or rather, the view of life he held is refuted, and with its refutation he becomes a different man.

Now let us look at the first instance, from *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock against Antonio and against Portia. The latter defeats Shylock's effort at revenge with a casuistic lawyer's trick. No one will believe that, having lost the pound of flesh he wanted, Shylock has lost his hankering for revenge. Converted to Christianity, Shylock will still be Shylock. For he has not found within his own experience anything to contradict the reasoning inspired in him by humiliation and by hate. He may be defeated, he has still to be refuted.

In *The Possessed*, Dostoevsky's protagonist Stavrogin recognizes at the end of the novel that his experience has been one of error and wrongdoing and commits suicide. He realizes that he cannot feel superior and in fact must feel inferior to all the persons he influenced and in part created. He cannot believe any of the doctrines or views of life he convinced others of, and he has recognized that a man's worth is measured by the quality of his belief, yet he himself believes in nothing. His suicide, then, is a confirmation of the fact that his view of the world has been refuted; not so the views of the others he took to be his inferiors. Dostoevsky does not try to catch his characters out, he tries to refute them as if they were philosophical arguments, and it is this attitude toward his characters and their beliefs which has made so many critics call Dostoevsky philosophical, the philosopher *par excellence* of the novel.

This opinion, however, is not held at all by the great Russian literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin.* According to Bakhtin, Dostoevsky had the ability to set down characters with different views of life and allow these different views to collide without involving his own judgment as to their meaning and their worth. This, by what I suppose Bakhtin took to be a "negative capability" with respect to alternative views of life. But to assume any such "negative capability" is just unreasonable, and if this is what Bakhtin meant by the "dialogical imagination" he attributed to the Russian novelist, then I have to say there is no such thing, and the term, however useful to Bakhtin, actually tells us nothing. Without consulting his own judgment of Western socialism and Russian socialism, of anarchism, nihilism, Western Catholicism, and Greek Orthodoxy, Dostoevsky would hardly have been able to present a single one of his major characters. That Dostoevsky was able to present his characters and their view of life fairly was due to the charity inherent in his own Christianity rather than to a suspension for the writing of his novels of his own deeply held beliefs.

There is some excuse for Bakhtin's mishandling of the term "dialogical" but there is none for a Western critic like Michael Holquist, who has not tried to explain it but taken it at face value. Bakhtin's book on Dostoevsky appeared in 1929, at the beginning of the Five Year Plan and the fanatic leftism which was soon to condemn millions to starvation and forced labor. Even to write

* *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, edited and translated by Caryl Emerson, University of Minnesota Press, 335 pp., $35.00.

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at that time of Dostoevsky, regarded by Stalin as a reactionary though a genius, was to risk exile, forced labor, even death.

What Bakhtin did in his book was to treat Dostoevsky as an innovator in the form of the novel, and to leave out of account all the ideological questions which entered into the motives of his characters. This was probably the only safe way of treating Dostoevsky at that time, and Bakhtin had many insights into Dostoevsky's aesthetic devices that are immensely valuable, so I do not want it to be thought that I am underrating his contribution. But the important element in that contribution is not the notion of the dialogical as opposed to the monological. I think we can better understand and better evaluate Dostoevsky's writings without referring to either of these terms.

I must add that in the most intelligent comment yet made here or in Europe on Bakhtin's work, René Wellek (in the *New Criterion* for June 1984) has convincingly refuted Bakhtin's notion that Dostoevsky's characters were independent of his own viewpoint. Wellek quotes Dostoevsky as saying (in a review of a play) that "It is too little to display all the given qualities of a character; rather one should resolutely illuminate it by one's own artistic point of view. An artist must not remain on the same level with the character he depicts." And Wellek rightly asks: "Isn't Shakespeare at least as 'polyphonic' as Dostoevsky? We still argue about Shakespeare's world view, while there cannot be any doubt about Dostoevsky's, at least in its outlines."

I SAY Dostoevsky's Christianity was charitable but it was also highly ideological. This Joseph Frank has made clear in one of the most original and interesting chapters of his second volume, *The Years of Ordeal, 1850-1859*.

As Joseph Frank recounts the story—it is based, of course, on Dostoevsky's own text—an important element in the novelist's conversion was his inner feeling of identification with rowdy Russian peasant convicts he had himself despised, making common cause with them against the Polish convicts who had expressed contempt for them. Thus, in Dostoevsky's moment of conversion there was, according to Frank, a nationalist element. He writes:

> What occurred to Dostoevsky, then, bears all the earmarks of a genuine conversion experience; and it also involves, as we see, a recovery of faith. But it is not faith in God or Christ that is in question; rather, it is a faith in the Russian common people as, in some sense, the human image of Christ. And this aspect of Dostoevsky's regeneration—the fact that it centers primarily on his relations with the people—must be strongly stressed in face of the only serious alternative explanation. In his enormously influential essay on Dostoevsky, Freud has argued that his arrest, the mock execution, and then his imprisonment triggered a masochistic need to submit to the punishment of the Czar-Father as a means of relieving the unconscious guilt caused by Dostoevsky's repressed Oedipal desire to commit parricide. But there is not the slightest empirical evidence to prove that Dostoevsky submitted to or sought punishment from the Czar-Father; his unyielding conduct throughout the interrogation, when directly confronted with authority figures representing the Czar, indicates the exact contrary. It was only from the people that Dostoevsky sought absolution. . . .

This could hardly be better said. And I must also commend Frank for relying in his analysis of Dostoevsky's moment of conversion on notions put forward by William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, a work which, as Frank notes, is "unsurpassed." And I was greatly pleased to see Frank turn aside from Freud's rather forced lucubrations about Dostoevsky. Freud is hardly one to follow in commenting on a religious thinker, considering the poverty of thought in the book Freud devoted to religion, *The Future of an Illusion*, which, as Gershom Scholem has well said, ". . . is an absolutely terrible book. If not for the fact of Freud's signature, everyone would reject it as a feeble work. . . ."

I SAID that most of what was written by members of my generation on Dostoevsky has turned out to be of little value. And I stand on that statement. However, here I want to make one caveat. Nothing that was written by members of my generation in the way of criticism of Dostoevsky has been valid, but if I can include André Malraux in my own generation, then at least one member of that generation was inspired by Dostoevsky to write something great in the Russian novelist's manner. I have in mind Malraux's *Man's Fate*. In this highly dramatic novel of political adventure in revolutionary China in 1927, Malraux availed himself of Gide's aesthetic purification (in *The Counterfeiters*) of Dostoevsky's narrative style, to which he added the intensity of the revolutionary situation in Shanghai and the highly charged passions of the Chinese revolutionaries and terrorists. Moreover, Malraux's sympathy with all of his characters had a Dostoevskian depth. So I think it can be said that if no one of my generation wrote greatly *on* Dostoevsky, at least someone of my generation wrote greatly *because of* Dostoevsky.

And all this has something to do with the motivation of Joseph Frank in addressing the task he set himself. Frank is not a member of my own generation; I think he belongs to the generation which came just after mine. Before he began this present work on Dostoevsky, he had planned a book on a number of writers, including Mal-

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raux, who could be connected with each other as having some relationship with the ideas of existentialism, which at that time was being widely discussed. Some of the particular pieces Frank brought off have been published, and in one of them he wrote eloquently about Malraux's "existential humanism." So he may very well have found his way to Dostoevsky through his own reading of Malraux.

All this is, of course, purely speculative, and perhaps Joseph Frank will tell us in one of his later volumes just what led him to the project he has begun so successfully. But surely the interest he had in existentialism in the early 50's must have been one of his promptings. Existentialism was one contemporary philosophical trend which tried to set forth a definite view of life. What made it different from past efforts of this kind in philosophy was that it did *not* aim at achieving wisdom, and ended up in accepting a form of absurdism. And now a British scholar, John Jones, has published a study of Dostoevsky's work,* in which the claim is made that the Russian novelist can be best understood when seen as belonging to the absurdist side of existentialism.

Joseph Frank has already commented on this effort—I think too generously—in the (London) *Times Literary Supplement*. In discussing Jones's interpretation of Dostoevsky's story *The Double*, Frank notes: "... for Jones ... 'when Mr. Golyadkin pays his cabby to do nothing, *The Double* leaps into focus as an absurd fable contemporary in spirit with Camus and a metaphysical one even more akin to Sartre.' Well, since we have gradually come to accept the idea that all reading is 'misreading,' why not?"

My reason for not agreeing would be that neither Dostoevsky nor his major characters—with the exception of Stavrogin, and finally perhaps not even he—were ready to settle for absurdism. Certainly the Russian novelist never gave up the hope of attaining the Christian equivalent of the love of wisdom, what Heidegger has finely called "the wisdom of love."

* *Dostoevsky*, Oxford University Press, 378 pp., $29.95.

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Economics in Decline

Melville J. Ulmer

THOUGH no Gallup polls or other surveys exist on the subject, there is considerable evidence that the last fifty years have witnessed a remarkable reversal in the professional prestige of economics. From the 1920's through the 1950's the profession appeared vital and progressive, yielding a stream of innovations that the business community, government councils, and people in general could appreciate. Economics was then called "Queen of the Social Sciences," more capable than the rest of generating verifiable knowledge. But in the last twenty years no significant, clearly established accretions to knowledge have appeared—none at least that are communicable to reasonably intelligent readers. To compound the impact of the evident stagnation, whatever authority economics may currently wield is weakened daily by the front-page squabbles of its leading exponents.

Meanwhile, the customary braggadocio of the profession's panjandrums, disaffecting in any setting, is especially so today when accompanied by the nearly uninterrupted failures of their business forecasts. For they err not only in misjudging the magnitude of swings in business activity, but more ominously in perversely mistaking the prospective *direction* of change. Six articles dwelling delightedly on this professional embarrassment have appeared in just the last two months in the limited number of publications regularly available to me. The delight is excusable. Pufferies by the forecasters themselves have been replete with self-congratulatory hoopla about expensive computerization, advanced mathematics, and "elegant" multi-equation models. The promises contrast blatantly with performance.

Thus, according to current critics—like investment counselor James Gibson, Rand Corporation executive Charles Wolf, Jr., and Heritage Foundation analyst Warren T. Brooks—the consensus of leading forecasters missed the "worst recession in forty years," the one in 1974-75; then they wrongly predicted recessions in 1978 and 1979; failed to foresee the major one that arrived in 1982; and finally underestimated the vigor of the 1983-84 expansion, so far, by 50 percent or more.

The "consensus" here includes such widely touted organizations as Data Resources Inc., Wharton Econometric Forecasting, and Chase Econometrics, together with the President's Council of Economic Advisers and the Congressional Budget Office, the last with a tax-supported staff of 200. No single member of the consensus performed consistently better than the average of all the others in forecasting a given coming year. Yet Gibson found that even looking just three months ahead, "predictions were wrong five out of the last seven times about whether real GNP would go up or down." For those who still believe that government officials can "fine-tune" the economy, all this is very bad news indeed.

In fairness it must be acknowledged that, at the very best, the outlook for business activity is bound to be uncertain. Too many of the relevant variables are by nature unpredictable, or nearly so. Obvious examples are droughts, abrupt actions by cartels (e.g., OPEC) to send prices sharply up or down, and sometimes capricious decisions by Congress on taxes, industrial regulations, or other pertinent legislation. Still, the errors of even the nation's premium forecasters are too consistent to be blamed on what economists call "exogenous" factors—or the intrinsically unpredictable. Either incorrect theory or inept treatment of the data must be held responsible. When this is taken together with the extravagant claims of the perpetrators, damage to public confidence is inevitable.

What makes the damage especially severe is that the common sense of the American people is traditionally attuned to the pragmatic maxim that "the the proof of knowledge lies in prediction." Schoolchildren learn about Galileo's dramatic experiment at the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the breathtaking confirmation in the heavens of Einstein's relativity theory. The relationship between belief and verifiable experience is deeply ingrained. Against that background, in common assessment, the nearly unswerving failures of business forecasting are positively damning.

PUBLIC confidence in economists is weakened further by their well-publicized wrangling. Naturally we should expect economists

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—and biologists and physicists too—to differ on public policy. Values, goals, and philosophy are then invoked, and divisions on these as a practical matter are often irreconcilable. But where economics is concerned, more frequently than not disputes center on fundamental economic relationships, or alleged facts, that ought to be adjudicable by reference to objective standards of logic and documented experience.

For example, consider the question: Do federal deficits cause high interest rates? Paul Volcker, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, says definitely yes, and especially now. Donald Regan, the Secretary of the Treasury, says not necessarily, and particularly not now. Both officials are backed by impressive and lushly financed staffs of expert economic advisers. Surely a solid body of knowledge, let alone the "Queen of the Social Sciences," should be able to resolve such a dispute.

Or consider a second controversy, one with a long-standing history: Do changes in the quantity of money have a more reliable impact on the level of business activity than federal fiscal policy? The question bears solemnly on national tactics for stabilization. Milton Friedman and his fellow monetarists place their bets on money. Walter Heller, Paul Samuelson, and other Keynesians back the manipulation of taxes and spending. An outsider might suppose that thirty years of repeated experimentation, more or less, would have settled this dispute. Yet it rages on, unresolved.

Since an exhaustive account of similar centers of stubborn controversy would probably crowd the shelves of the Library of Congress, here is a sampling of important questions to which flatly opposing responses are provided by notable authorities: Would a substantial increase in tax rates raise or lower total government revenues under present circumstances? Can the threat of renewed inflation be exorcised more effectively by tight money (to raise interest rates and diminish investment) or by looser reins (to increase output and productivity)? Do periodic boosts in the minimum wage help to reduce poverty, or do they create unemployment, stimulate inflation, and hence spread poverty? Would a more liberal immigration law raise or lower the prosperity of the American public as a whole? Has the distribution of income grown more or less equal over the last twenty or thirty years? On each of these crucial questions imposing authorities take firm positions on opposite sides.

Disagreements are frequent enough in all branches of knowledge, but in *usual* practice they are subject to an ultimate test: Is the hypothesis in question supported by relevant observations? Assuming that the required data are known or ascertainable, the controversy is ended as soon as the facts are in. If some pertinent information is unknown or unreliable, conventional scientists agree that final judgment must be suspected. But not so in economics.

This difference has not gone unnoticed by a few distinguished economists with sufficient intellectual independence, and confidence in themselves, to oppose the highly influential professional mainstream. Included among the dissidents, vocal enough to be identified, are two Nobel laureates, perhaps thirty or so other highly productive economists, and a few notable supporters from sister social sciences. They are of diverse political backgrounds. The titles of some of their recent books and articles indicate their tenor: *What's Wrong With Economics* (Benjamin Ward); *Why Economics Is Not a Science* (Alfred S. Eichner, ed.); "Theoretical Assumptions and Observed Facts" (Wassily Leontief); *The Crisis in Economic Theory* (Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell, eds.); "The Guilds of Academe" (Jack Barbash); *The Crisis in Keynesian Economics* (John R. Hicks); "The Second Crisis in Economic Theory" (Joan Robinson); "Let's Take the Con Out of Econometrics" (Edward E. Leamer).

While the viewpoints differ in detail, their critical assaults converge on the absence of empirical content, or the outright distortion of observational materials, in modern research procedures. In the words of one of the dissidents, John Blatt, the profession has retreated into "an economic cloud cuckoo land of mathematical abstractions." In that framework, he continues, "any resemblance to actual markets, competitive or otherwise, is not purely accidental—it is simply nonexistent!" Put differently, the prevailing propensity of mainstream economics is to look inward at theoretical "models," ever preoccupied with elaboration and refinement, never outward at the real world in action, which is the only laboratory social science has.

Of course, it was not always so, and it would be a gross mistake to suppose that the accumulated sum of economic knowledge approaches zero. The masterpiece of the reputed father of economics, Adam Smith, is replete with empirical generalizations and nearly constant references to factual information, including the fragmentary statistics then available with which he guided and checked his thinking. Even the pure theory of the great English economist Alfred Marshall, a century later in Cambridge, was framed with a deliberate effort to shape practical tools of investigation for enriching empirical studies. But most consciously in the spirit of modern scientific method was the work of an American scholar, Wesley Clair Mitchell, whose career spanned the years from just before World War I to the early 1940's.

Impatient with the increasingly arid theorizing of his contemporaries, which (as he phrased it) showed how things *might* happen under arbitrarily assumed circumstances, Mitchell resolved to find out how they in fact did happen. His most revolutionary departure from the static framework of his colleagues, ever studded by the phrase "other things being equal," was to adopt a dy-

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namic, observational approach—pragmatic in the spirit of his teacher, John Dewey—which recognized the economic system as being always in motion, as it obviously is. His earliest, most remarkable achievement was to construct an empirically verified theory of "self-generating" business cycles, which stands in its fundamentals to this day. It can be contended—and has been so maintained by such diverse personalities as Arthur F. Burns and Milton Friedman—that in this study Mitchell anticipated much that was sound in the later contribution of John Maynard Keynes, only in a more fruitfully dynamic and empirical context.

Yet Mitchell's approach conflicted bluntly with the conventional wisdom, then and now. The roots of that conventional wisdom, since flowered into the dazzling mathematical models of today, had already been firmly implanted. Mainstream economics was and remains centered around the concept of "equilibrium," a static situation in which opposing forces, like demands and supplies, are exactly in balance. Assuming perfect knowledge and "rational" behavior by the "actors" in their scenarios (usually buyers and sellers), deductive reasoning could predict what would happen. In earlier times the reasoning was laboriously verbal. Today, expressed mathematically, the assumptions lead to multi-equation systems that, theoretically, are solvable. The solution represents the achievement of the inevitable, preordained consummation: a stable equilibrium.

Mitchell's own investigations contradicted such speculations. Looking at actual events as they appeared over time, he found no signs of equilibrium but instead constant change, propelled in the short run by inherent cyclical impulses, entwined in the longer run with powerful technological and institutional innovations. These early observations were the grist of his theory of business-cycle patterns, as well as some less developed notions about longer-term growth, since explored by a disciple, Nobel laureate Simon Kuznets.

The most formidable block Mitchell confronted to the further pursuit of his initial approach was the paucity of empirical materials. There simply was no reliable information at the time on the nation's total output, the price level, employment, or the other quantitative elements that deductive thinkers dealt with so glibly in the abstract. To overcome that obstacle, Mitchell founded the famed National Bureau of Economic Research, which constructed under his direction the first statistical series on the gross national product, the national income, consumption expenditures, savings, investment, retail and wholesale prices, and most of the other data now produced regularly by our own federal government and most other governments around the world. For that undertaking he recruited a group of young people like Kuznets, Arthur F. Burns, Moses Abramovits, Geoffrey Moore, and Solomon Fabricant, all of whom went on to win independent fame and who comprise the older phalanx of the small number of dissident economists today.

WHY and how was economics diverted from this productive historical and dynamic approach? Many of the dissidents are convinced that a major stimulus for the diversion was a single book, *Foundations of Economic Analysis*, by the future Nobel laureate Paul A. Samuelson, which appeared in 1947. This intellectually brilliant work placed the entire body of deductive economic theory in a single volume of concisely expressed mathematical language. It also demonstrated the power of mathematics in economic puzzle-solving, even though the "puzzles" with which Samuelson and his predecessors grappled were the artificial products of their own imaginations. These were the attractions that led frustrated mathematicians all over the country, young and old, to come streaming into economics departments where they could attach economic names to their symbols, turn the deductive cranks, and produce professional "papers." That was the positive result. The negative result was more important.

Directly or indirectly, Samuelson's mathematical revolution reinforced and generalized the three major flaws that debilitate mainstream economics today and that account for its unresolved disputes, its forecasting errors, and its notable failure in recent decades to produce new, verifiable knowledge. The three flaws are: nearly exclusive reliance on deductive reasoning; a preoccupation with the static concept of equilibrium; and the oversimplifications required to match actual data with mathematical abstractions.

The misuse of deductive reasoning—and of mathematics, too—accounts for most of the otherwise inexplicable disagreements among reputable economists. Aspiring economists with mathematical backgrounds leaped at the opportunity to dance in Samuelson's glamorous shadow, enshrouding their incantations in a language neither the general public nor their older colleagues could possibly understand. Constructing mathematical models wildly, they proceeded to prove almost anything. For given the appropriate assumptions and using deductive reasoning, one can indeed "prove" almost anything. Change the assumptions, and one changes the conclusions. Unless disciplined by the scientific imperative to check assumptions against the facts, or to check results against experience, competing models can proliferate and survive side by side, as they clearly do, even though in obvious disagreement.

The bewitching siren of deductive reasoning has also played a part in the recent sterility of economics. Some of the best minds are drawn by its lure into enterprises that, by their nature, are thoroughly unproductive. A signal case in point is that of the 1983 Nobel Prize winner, Gerard Debreu. His contribution was, through pure mathematical ingenuity, to come up with a unique solu-

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tion to the renowned "Walrasian equilibrium problem." The Walrasian equilibrium is a complex system of abstract equations—one supposedly for each good and service in the economy. The assumptions underlying these equations are nothing less than fantastic: that all buyers and sellers have perfect knowledge of the future as well as the present and the past; that each succeeds in achieving "optimal" objectives—maximum profits, maximum wages, maximum "utilities," or whatever; that resources move instantaneously, without friction, to their most profitable uses; and that capital and labor are "homogeneous," or equally adaptable to all possible employments.

Debreu spent a lifetime evolving his solution to the Walrasian equilibrium problem, which shows that in equilibrium all the assumed activities are mutually consistent. Yet it is easily seen, by the layman as well as the economist, that his achievement has no practical use and discloses nothing whatsoever about actual economic behavior. Ingenuously, one admirer (E. Roy Weintraub) has boasted that in Debreu's demonstration "empirical work, ideas of facts and falsification, played no role at all"—a condition that to other eyes would seem a deadly failing.

It is this concept of equilibrium that permeates all of mainstream economics and represents its second basic flaw. It appears, perhaps most notoriously, in Keynesian theory. According to that theory, the whole economy floats more or less constantly in an equilibrium, which may settle for a time at a high or low level of business activity. The strategic indicator to watch is the sum of business investment and government spending. If that sum is too low—as Keynes thought it generally would be—the economy will founder in deep depression, or at some other unfortunate level of business activity well below the ideal of "full employment."

The obvious correction follows from the Keynesian definition of the strategic indicator. Since government wields no direct control over business investment, the answer is simply to pump up government outlays. Miraculously, then, according to the Keynesian bible (*The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money*), business activity will shoot up to its full-employment level. The sole provision is that the increase in government spending be large enough. Nothing is said about tax rates because they are supposed to remain fixed. Only *deficit* spending will do the trick.

That, in a nutshell, is the substance of the so-called Keynesian revolution. To deny that it failed would be to overlook the history of the past two decades: the inflationary roller-coaster pattern of economic activity under Keynesian ministrations and its culmination in the 13-percent-per-annum price increase, coupled with 8-percent unemployment, that confronted Ronald Reagan when he took office. In the received doctrine, inflation was not supposed to happen unless, by some miscalculation, the full-employment ideal had been reached and then passed.

The main trouble with Keynesian theory was that its assumption of equilibrium fitted the ever fluctuating real economy no more than a reasoned entreaty would contain an enraged gorilla. In the theory, the dynamic, ever-changing relationships in business activity are frozen into a putative equilibrium of "constants," including the shifting expectations of consumers, business, and labor, and their volatile decisions that swing with the ups and downs of business. One example of the resulting errors will suffice to illustrate the rest. It concerns the role of the "marginal propensity to consume," commonly known as the MPC.

Despite its imposing designation, the MPC refers simply to a ratio between a simultaneous change in consumers' expenditures and in their incomes. The latter is supposed to stimulate the former, as it probably does. But in the Keynesian equilibrium format, this ratio is assumed to be constant over time, and so in econometric studies it is usually estimated at its average level over the previous fifteen or twenty years. An empirical approach would recognize at once that the MPC is a strategic variable, changing constantly in the grip of cyclical fluctuations. It was so treated by Mitchell. Thus, coming out of recession with pent-up demands, consumers' outlays would be expected to rise even faster than their incomes, as they indeed did in the early quarters of the 1983 recovery. Then the MPC (or the change in consumer expenditures divided by the change in consumer incomes) was 1.07, outlays slightly exceeding incomes. By late 1984, with many essential needs already satisfied, the ratio dropped to 0.71. That meant that consumers spent less than three-fourths of the rise in their incomes.

Common sense would suggest some such result, but recall that Keynes treated the ratio as a constant. With such errors entrenched, the miscalculations of Keynesian policy-makers and forecasters were inescapable.

Of course there are other reasons why disaster overtook Keynesian economics, especially since later followers went beyond the master to fine-tune monetary policy and tax rates as well as government outlays. Their errors with the MPC were compounded by equally erroneous "equilibrium" estimates of other dynamic relationships (like "investment multipliers" and "accelerators"). With poor forecasting, their "stabilizing" measures often came at the wrong times and in the wrong quantities. Even on those rare occasions when they were right, Congress and the President typically acted only after fatal delays. But there is yet another reason for their ineffectiveness that must be noted because it involves other branches of analysis and represents the third and final major flaw in mainstream economics.

In monetary affairs, foreign trade, manufactur-

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ing, and all the other activities that determine business activity, the number of potentially significant variables is for practical purposes infinite. An experienced analyst, free of equilibrium illusions, would naturally center his attention upon those potential forces that at the time were the most significant, leaving others tentatively in the background. That option is not open to the mechanistic models of the mainstream, which are designed to represent the entire economy at once (in equilibrium, of course). In order to reduce the number of variables to manageable size, mainstreamers resort to a simplification known as "aggregation." This is a shortcut process of summing up the myriad economic activities into a few broad categories like investment, consumption, saving, and unemployment, as in the Keynesian doctrine. Depending on how gross the aggregation process is, it is an evergreen source of potential error.

For example, one major sector of unemployment consists of relatively skilled workers like secretaries, machinists, crane operators, and on upward to computer technicians and professionals. That segment of the jobless rises and falls most sensitively in response to booms and recessions. Another major segment of the unemployed consists of the unskilled—cleaning women, ditch diggers, baggage handlers, and such—and varies much more significantly with changes in social legislation, especially welfare allowances, food stamps, and unemployment insurance. This second segment, with its low productivity, is inclined to be relatively stable and generally large, in good times as well as bad.

Mistaking one segment for the other, as aggregating both together invites, has led to self-defeating policies. Thus, under Keynesian administrations efforts were undertaken to reduce joblessness by expanding the nation's spending through the familiar stimulative measures. But since unemployment at times was mainly of the unskilled, the tactics were fruitless. Very few jobs were available for the unskilled *at wages they were willing to accept*, no matter how vigorously the pump was primed. Through the late 1960's and the decade of the 1970's the most notable result of these efforts was inflation.

SINCE mainstream economics is by nature dogmatic, and most often ideological to boot, experience has proved to be an ineffective teacher. Facts do not disturb deductive reasoning based on arbitrary assumptions. Moreover, professional reputations, including Nobed Prizes, continue to rest on faithful devotion to the sacred mysteries of mainstream methodology. The weight of such personal investments has calcified into a self-perpetuating cult, with guildlike restrictions on apprenticeships and approved research procedures. This is why no prospective turnabout appears in the offing, at least not one internally generated within the professional mainstream itself.

External forces are another matter. The prestige of no professional group—doctors, lawyers, or politicians—can plummet indefinitely without courting the complete rejection of its consuming public. Economics cannot be excepted. Competition in the world of ideas seems certain to enforce a return to standards that will insure its ultimate survival: plain speaking, testable theories, and verifiable evidence, whether inspired by present or future dissidents from the prevailing mainstream. Until that counterrevolution arises, as it must in time, the authority of economics and economists, which has already fallen so far, will no doubt fall even lower still.

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What Hubert Humphrey Wrought

Nelson W. Polsby

In my New York *Times* this morning there is a review of a televised documentary on the House Judiciary Committee impeachment proceedings of ten years ago. Members of the committee are characterized in the documentary by narrator Charles McDowell as "obscure members of Congress, partisan politicians, suspected second-raters." This description, says the *Times* reviewer, "is not uncharitable; it is realistic. There were no household names" among these members of Congress. The moral we are asked to draw is: the best defense against being a suspected second-rater is to become a household name. It should surprise nobody that journalists should put such nonsense about. After all, anything that increases the value of publicity increases the power of people who give and withhold and traffic in publicity, such as themselves.

Those of us who look to responsible journalists and to their daily and weekly product for our bearings in this confusing world must on this account learn to tread carefully. The "first rough draft of history," as with mock-humility serious journalism is sometimes styled, can easily be corrupted by all sorts of institutionally embedded problems, not the least of which is the journalist's belief that second-raters are people he has had no previous occasion to take notice of.

Corresponding problems may afflict later drafts of history as well. I have been reading with some amazement of the difficulties various writers have had, for example, in ascertaining simple facts about the life of John F. Kennedy. Two enterprising, and, so far as I can tell, reputable reporters, Joan and Clay Blair, some years ago apparently gave up their attempt to do a full-scale biography of John Kennedy and ended it at the point at which he was elected to Congress because the fog of disinformation put out by the late President's family overwhelmed their capacity to evaluate the facts in a fair and dispassionate manner. And so in *The Search for JFK* they restricted themselves to giving, I believe for the first time, accurate accounts of John Kennedy's education, his health, and his war record.

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In their recent overview of the history of the Kennedy clan,* Peter Collier and David Horowitz describe the attitude of the family thus:

> Books, like everything else, could be bought. Scholars and writers could be seduced and later bullied by the family's distinctive charisma so that they would want to write affirmation, to ratify a congenial version of reality, and to amplify the now self-propelling Kennedy myths . . . . No group has been more protected by literary sycophants.

The Kennedys, it seems, have been blessed with court historians of unusual skill and high professional standing (names on request) to whom they have given special access and who, in return, have written their histories from the unique perspective this access has afforded. Thus in their behalf have been committed several of the most flagrant—that is to say most successful—examples of contemporary history written to order. I doubt they are the only examples. Presumably, following the insight of Lord Keynes, we shall not be around to see how well these accounts stand up over the long run, and so it is important over the short run to spread a few caveats around.

At stake are two things. First, ordinary citizens pay, and pay heavily, for the distortion of their contemporary political history because what passes for consensus about contemporary history provides the framework that organizes the political choices we all must make. Common sense—as well as clear experimental evidence—tells us that the context within which questions are framed exerts a powerful influence on how they are answered. So if we get our heroes and our bums mixed up owing to the vagaries of public relations, that can lead to disastrously misguided public choices.

Moreover, there is a further impact on the way political leaders behave. As politicians learn that what counts is shadow and not substance, that the way to get ahead is to neglect the serious examination of public problems and to spend their energy positioning themselves, and courting the media, they will begin to behave accordingly. This I take to be the deeper meaning of a well-publicized remark made by Gary Hart when he first entered

* *The Kennedys: An American Drama*; see the review by Paul Johnson in last month's Commentary.—Ed.

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the Senate ten years ago. Looking around at his colleagues, and presumably in the mirror, Hart, with some self-satisfaction, said: "We're not a bunch of little Humphreys."

HUBERT HORATIO HUMPHREY, Democrat of Minnesota, who died in 1978 after thirty years at the center of national politics, was a remarkable figure in American political history: an overachiever, an idealist, an institution-builder, and a legislator of the first rank. He also failed to be elected President, and neglected as Vice President to spit in Lyndon Johnson's eye. These two oversights, both of which I regret, did him no good. Finally, in an equally bad move, he died much too soon, at age sixty-seven, and missed out on the adulation that Americans heap rather indiscriminately upon political figures from Herbert Hoover to I.F. Stone, if they live long enough.

Humphrey appears as a supporting actor in a number of accounts of the postwar era, but his life and works have so far escaped sustained examination, an injustice considerably redressed by the recent publication of a full-scale biography by Carl Solberg.* Of Solberg I know nothing, other than that he has done a thorough and conscientious piece of research—marred by only a few inconsequential mistakes. He evidently never knew Humphrey, but he has spoken to a lot of people who did, and has gone through the papers, the files, and the oral histories that are nowadays deposited in the wake of any reasonably active public figure.

And, heaven knows, Humphrey was active. Solberg chooses to place Humphrey in the stream of Midwest progressivism, and compares him to another prairie orator who never got to be President, William Jennings Bryan. Thus, the high point of Humphrey's life, as Solberg tells it, Humphrey's Cross of Gold speech, is the moment in 1948 when Humphrey led the charge in support of the minority civil-rights plank at the Democratic convention.

I suppose this is defensible as a piece of dramaturgical carpentry, but it seems to me desirable to think of real lives as governed by less symmetrical and convenient rhythms. Humphrey was, to be sure, a catalyst of some important political forces in 1948, but he was that and much more later on in the Senate—notably in his brilliantly sustained virtuoso performance in managing the 1964 civil-rights law through to enactment. "All told," Solberg says, "he fathered more important legislation from origin to enactment than any other member of Congress in history."

This is an astonishing claim, on at least two counts. In the first place, it may very well be true. The mind races off in trivial pursuit of possible competitors: Sam Rayburn? George Norris? Henry Clay? Humphrey's record was arguably as long and even more varied than what these three did. In the second place, if it is anywhere near to being true —and that it certainly is—then why doesn't this fact about Humphrey swamp everything else we know about him? Where are the public celebrations of so heroic a lifetime of accomplishment?

All swallowed up by the Vietnam war, I'm afraid, and by Humphrey's unwillingness—maybe incapacity—as Vice President and then as presidential candidate to draw the line and protect himself against Lyndon Johnson's sadistic bullying. Here is Humphrey on his father's response to losing his store and his home in the Depression: "After this terrible loss he carried not an ounce of bitterness, of apology or defeatism. Right up to the time he died . . . he continued . . . to plunge into life, the bitter and the sweet, with nothing held back, without protecting himself with suspicion, reserve, or emotional caution."

This seems to me a significant key to Humphrey. It was not merely his heritage and his nature to go all out, and to fail adequately to protect himself. It also may have been Humphrey's conscious belief that his energy, optimism, and enthusiasm were resources that were so fundamental to his everyday existence that to hold them back would be in some personal sense unthinkable, an abdication. A nastier man—even a more reserved one—would have been a less accommodating Vice President for Lyndon Johnson, and it can be argued that it would have been better for the country if Johnson had been forced earlier to bear the whole brunt of justifying his Vietnam policy.

In any event, sharing that burden damaged Humphrey badly with his old liberal constituency. One consequence was that, as Humphrey calculated, he could never become President without Johnson's aid. That calculation played a part earlier in his decision to become Johnson's Vice President in the first place. Later on, so long as Robert Kennedy was alive, Humphrey could count on Johnson's support and that of a very sizable anti-Kennedy bloc in the Democratic party. Kennedy's death, as Solberg points out in the best fragment of political analysis in the book, deprived Humphrey of all his anti-Kennedy support, including Johnson's. Far from helping his candidacy, Kennedy's death weakened Humphrey to such an extent that, I would argue, it deprived him of the Presidency.

I THINK Humphrey would have been an original, ingenious, energetic, and successful President, but we will never know. We do know that given half a chance he did extraordinary things with the political institutions he did inhabit. Unlike his famous Democratic contemporaries to whom he lost various battles—John Kennedy, Estes Kefauver, and Johnson—Humphrey was a party builder in his home state. His competitors were at best selfish factionalists in local politics. Not Humphrey, who gave encouragement to a full generation of younger Democratic politi-

* *Hubert Humphrey: A Biography*, Norton, 572 pp., $19.95.

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cal activists after taking the lead in stitching together the Democratic-Farmer Labor party of Minnesota. By the account of this biography, he worked well collegially, giving plenty of room to the superior organizational talents of Orville Freeman, welcoming the intellectual contributions of Evron Kirkpatrick and Arthur Naftalin. Of course, he was universally acknowledged to be the group's star turn, but this seems reasonable enough: Humphrey's personality had star quality. He bubbled over with energy, good will, wit, and intelligence. He was corny, open, affectionate, and tremendously appealing in a bull session with peers or making a campaign speech to the folks. And he loved to talk, to take an idea he had just heard and play with it for a while, working it into his intellectual repertoire. The stories are endless describing his virtuosity as a public speaker, weeping sentimentally with one eye while counting the house with the other, weaving new ideas together with old homilies.

Cooler heads thought Humphrey talked too much and too long. Especially when he was tired or out of sorts his public utterances became shapeless and endless, but at his best, as Solberg rightly says, there was nobody better. And the constant experience of having to put thoughts together for public consumption was a sort of discipline for Humphrey, fixing and ordering ideas in his mind and facilitating his mastery of the substantive ins and outs of more public policies than any politician of his generation, from taxes to agricultural policy, from Medicare to nuclear disarmament. Small wonder that Nikita Khrushchev elected to spend eight hours straight in a marathon private conversation the first time he met Humphrey.

THE Senate turned out to be a nearly ideal arena for the exercise of Humphrey's overwhelming talents, although it certainly did not start out that way. When Humphrey arrived there, in 1949, he was fresh from his civil-rights triumph at the Democratic national convention—one of the results of which was a Southern walkout and a handful of electoral votes from the solid South cast for the Dixiecrat presidential candidacy of Strom Thurmond of South Carolina. The Senate was dominated by these same Southerners, many of them intelligent, dignified, and deeply conservative men from one-party states with restricted lily-white electorates. Ensconced in their protected political niche, in loose coalition with the bulk of the Republicans in the Senate, they conducted genteel guerrilla warfare on the New Deal, and ran their affairs with the collegial decorum of an exclusive men's club.

The collegiality of the place may have been its Achilles' heel; although Humphrey's brashness and his unswerving commitment to an enormous laundry list of progressive causes at first kept him out of the good graces of the walruses who dominated the Senate, Humphrey was an immensely charming and clubbable man, good-humored and without the capacity to bear grudges. And, as his elders observed, when he got his teeth into a subject he mastered it thoroughly. In time he found himself on good terms throughout the chamber, the unofficial ambassador from the Senate's outgunned and outnumbered liberal Democrats to the rest of the body.

Much has been made of Lyndon Johnson's role in brokering Humphrey's acceptance by the Senate club. Although Johnson entered the Senate on the same day as Humphrey, he had already served for six years in the House of Representatives, and was well connected in Washington and in and around the Capitol building. As a Senator, Johnson pursued an erratic course unencumbered by substantive commitments, zigging to protect his flank with his conservative Texas constituents, zagging to protect a possible future as national leader of the Democratic party. In short order Johnson was Richard Russell's protégé and Russell installed him as party leader in the Senate with a mandate to reach all the way across the spectrum within the chamber. Johnson was in his element, wheeling and dealing endlessly, and somewhat vacuously, since, with Dwight Eisenhower in the White House, any serious Democratic programs were on hold. His main amusement consisted of stealing small coups from the plodding William Knowland, the Senate Republican leader.

In the Eisenhower years, over the full span of time that Johnson led the Senate Democrats, the real agenda of the Democratic party—the agenda that would become the party program once the Democrats regained the White House—was in the custody of Paul Butler's powerless Democratic advisory council and of Senate liberals such as Herbert Lehman, Paul Douglas, and most important of all, Hubert Humphrey.

Lyndon Johnson, ever hungry to stamp his initials on public property, transformed the management of the Senate in his eight years as Democratic leader. What had been a council of elders became a much more tightly controlled and hierarchical apparatus operating out of Johnson's hip pocket. And as proved to be true of more than one of Johnson's achievements, it crumbled rapidly once Johnson left the scene. Johnson's successor, Mike Mansfield, had no burning desire to push his colleagues around, and Johnson's attempt as Vice President to maintain his leadership of the Senate Democratic caucus was firmly rebuffed. Johnson also tried, in 1960, to advance his presidential candidacy through his senatorial contacts. It was a failure; John Kennedy's analysis of what it took to win—neglect senatorial duties, persuade state party leaders in the big states—was better.

Kennedy's method of persuasion was tailored to the fears that many state party leaders had about a Roman Catholic on the ticket. Most of them were themselves Catholics, but they remembered Al Smith's failed candidacy and so con-

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vincing evidence of electoral popularity was what Kennedy needed to provide, and what he delivered by contesting and doing well in a couple of primary elections. In doing so, the footsteps he was following belonged not so much to Al Smith as to Estes Kefauver of Tennessee. Kefauver was one of the luckiest men ever to sit in the Senate. As a liberal he was an outcast so far as the Southerners were concerned. Nor was he much of a legislative worker, or compelling orator. He had not much money, a complicated domestic life, and came from a small state, yet from the spring of 1951 until his death a dozen years later, Kefauver was always a factor in presidential politics. He was a tireless campaigner and did well in primary elections from 1952 onward. But more to the point, he was a popular figure, television's first political hero.

The story comes right out of a science-fiction B movie. By chance a stray bug is irradiated by the mad scientist's beam of light. Instantaneously the bug grows into a creature big enough to eat Cleveland. That is what happened to Kefauver, who chanced to be holding hearings on organized crime just at the instant when most of the nation was first wired up for television. Kefauver's hearings became a runaway daytime TV hit, and Kefauver, who conducted himself before the camera with a *gravitas* reminiscent of Gary Cooper, or at least Randolph Scott, became a new sort of Senator: the grasshopper who bests the ants. Or almost: Kefauver got to be Adlai Stevenson's running mate in 1956, but he never won the big prize. Kennedy, following the same game plan but with far greater resources, made it all the way to the White House less than a decade after Kefauver first burst upon the national stage.

Like Johnson, like Kefauver, like Kennedy, Humphrey was a publicity hound. Publicity was a resource. What made Humphrey different from the others was that he used the publicity as a way of advancing not only Humphrey's ambitions but also Humphrey's substantive agenda. Virtually everybody in public life has a few pet programs. Humphrey's interests ran right across the board, and they were serious interests, leading to serious legislative commitments. They led also to relationships with interest groups that ranged far beyond his Minnesota base. Humphrey became famous as the sponsor of Senate bills that were going nowhere—for the moment. The time came, however, when a fair number of Humphrey initiatives—Medicare, the Peace Corps, and the nuclear test-ban treaty are three good examples—bore fruit.

Humphrey was not necessarily the original inventor of these or the dozens of other additions, large and small, that he made to the legislative record and to public policy in our time. His role was more often to spot a good idea and put it into play, to talk it up, to stimulate technical evaluation of its consequences, to encourage proponents, wear down opponents, and convert bystanders. This process of policy incubation is frequently necessary in our system, which requires elaborate clearance procedures for political innovations to move forward to enactment.

This sort of work is the serious work for which Americans pay salaries to our national legislators. It does not diminish Johnson's accomplishments in managing the Senate as an institution, or Kennedy's and Kefauver's ingenuity in exploiting the Senate as a springboard for their presidential ambitions, to state that it was Humphrey more than any other modern Senator who figured out how to use the Senate to create new public policy. This was a valuable example to his peers and to his younger colleagues, not least because policy incubation has become so significant a part of the Senate's distinctive contribution to the political system.

The men's club that Humphrey entered in 1948 is no more. It was killed in part by Johnson's need to run the place as a one-man band, as he did for a while, and the subsequent reaction to Johnson's domineering ways. Television played a part as well, in opening up a whole new range of political opportunities for Senators who knew how to get publicity. As senatorial ambitions grew, so did senatorial staffs, creating little empires. These little empires increasingly are run for the benefit of little emperors, who today interact on less intimate collegial terms with their fellow Senators than they once did. The Senate is now a rather individualistic, outward-looking place, and each Senator pursues a very busy and absorbing private agenda. Insofar as a part of that agenda includes cultivating a small portfolio of public policies, and maintaining a level of expertise and serious involvement in them that goes beyond the perfunctory and the purely exploitative, the best contemporary U.S. Senators have turned themselves into "little Humphreys."

So far, the history of our times does not read this way, mainly, I suppose, because contemporary American political history centers on Presidents, on Kennedys, and on winners, not losers, of presidential campaigns. So even though there is now a bust of Humphrey in the Capitol building, his real significance in American politics has yet to be fully appreciated.

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The Stranger

A Story

Yehoshua Bar Yosef

THE year before your birth was a blessed year. The loving rains never ceased, roofs collapsed. Roads were washed out. Passersby drowned from flooded streams, and the saturated earth gave a plentiful harvest.

Safed was never granted such an abundance from the neighboring villages as it was that year. Eggs, vegetables, chickens, fish, sheep, and cattle were sold in the marketplaces, and everything in the stores was dirt cheap. That year, the people of Safed ate Sabbath meals during the week, and festival meals on the Sabbath. As often happens when people eat more than usual, many fell ill, and many were carried to the graveyard. Along with full sun and overflowing rains came sore throats, laughter, tears, celebrations in the synagogue, and prayers in the mourners' homes.

That same winter, Grandfather's house was unusually blessed. He was the local doctor-druggist. Lots of throats needed his feather, with which he spread the curing ointment, and people spent lots of money on malaria cures as well as on other types of medicines. Each day hundreds stood waiting in line for him.

Both the Jews of Safed and the neighboring Arabs waited in long patient lines for Grandfather's expert hand. They used to say that his hand was lighter than the feather that was held in it. Before you could open your mouth, your throat was smeared and your illness was no longer. I remember clearly the pained expressions on their faces, the dirty babies' cries while they were clutched tightly in the hands of their frightened Arab mothers, the sound of Psalms sung with Grandfather's special melody, while his feather worked its wonders. Grandfather was a strange man; he used to recite Psalms even while swabbing the throat of an Arab. The Arabs loved and admired him—they used to call him "Hajj." They used to kiss his hands in fear and trembling and beg for his blessing. The Arabs were different in those days; even the days themselves were different.

I was sixteen-and-a-half years old that spring, seven months married, my body full and my face glowing—a baby kicking inside my stomach. Your father, may he rest in peace, was seventeen, and, like a ten-year-old, still longed for his father's house in Jerusalem. He came to Safed for the first time on his wedding day; that was also the first time he saw me. Even when he covered my face with the wedding veil he barely saw my dress and I saw only his shoes. It was only afterward that I saw his tall, thin frame, his pale face, his long round sidelocks, and his childlike lips, so vibrantly smiling. He was a Jerusalemite and, as was well known, people there ate mere forkfuls of food—just enough to keep them alive. In Safed, everything was in abundance, there was money from the community fund, which was no smaller than the community fund in Jerusalem. The cold air tempted the appetite, the heart was free and easy, the houses of study many, and from every corner burst forth the songs and sounds of the Torah. To Safed came joyful Hasidim, to Jerusalem saddened Lithuanian Jews. In Jerusalem, the Western Wall of the Temple was near to everyone's door, and so was the memory of the Holy Temple's destruction, lamented constantly by every heart. But in Safed, the graves of Mishnaic rabbis lay on the outskirts of the city; rather than evoking sad memories of days past, they healed ailing hearts. This was the reason there were so many celebrations in Safed. A bride could be escorted to her wedding canopy while, somewhere else, a newborn son came into the world's fresh air. In another place, a sick person became well and graced his friends with a feast in honor of his recovery. Each day was the anniversary of the death of some righteous rabbi, and every one of these celebrations was permeated with joy. People sang and prayed and never lent their thoughts to the past.

From the day your father came to Safed, he became fleshier, and his skin became bleached. His black eyes sparkled like set emeralds, his face was fresh, and his side curls and sprouting beard be-

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YEHOSHUA BAR YOSEF is this year's winner of the Bialik Prize, Israel's highest award for literary achievement. Mr. Bar Yosef was born into a well-known hasidic family in Safed (Palestine) in 1912; he grew up in Hungary, where he attended the Satmar Yeshiva, and then returned to Jerusalem while still a teenager to complete his studies. He has been a full-time writer since 1935. Among his works, which include an autobiography, several novels, and dozens of short stories, are *The Enchanted City*, *Succah of Peace*, *The People of Beit Rimon*, *On the Way to the Red Rock*, and *Tales of Safed and Jerusalem*, from which the present story is taken. Practically none of his work has so far appeared in English. "The Stranger" was translated from the Hebrew by A. WEINSTEIN. Copyright © 1984 by Keter Publishing House, Jerusalem.

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came round and full. Yet oftentimes a longing for the smells of Jerusalem and the stones of the Western Wall overcame him. In his free time he used to write long letters in his beautiful flowery hand to his family and friends. But mostly he would sit in the study house and through the sun-drenched windows sing a sad song, full of longing. The sound of the Torah. I used to sit by my window across from the study house and knit . . . and knit. . . .

Our family was overflowing with sons, silver and gold vessels, Torah, food and drink. Not only did we get money from the community fund like everyone else in Safed, but also Grandfather provided for us from his abundant household. On Sabbaths and festivals we would gather in his house and eat, drink, and sing until midnight. The Purim feast was especially known as a family occasion, the flavor of which remained with us for the rest of the year. As many as fifty people gathered, starting with Grandfather and ending with the newest suckling in the cradle. We used to dine in the largest room where kerosene lamps and candles by the dozens cast a blinding glare. Three tables were set with everything in place and arranged in a horseshoe like the Hebrew letter *het*.

In the open area between the tables, the poor people of Safed, content with their lot, would enter, dressed in costumes of all different kinds. They sang, joked, and laughed, and entertained until the whole house was raucous with happy sounds. The children ran up to the "entertainers" and back. In their tiny hands were chicken legs, slices of *hallah*, cake, glasses of wine. At the end of the performance, everyone in costume approached the place where Grandfather sat, drank *le-hayyim*, stuck his hand into the coin plate that stood on the table, and took whatever he felt like. No one ever took more than he rightfully deserved. The people may have been poor, but they were honest.

On that very Purim day Grandfather's house was inundated with joy. I was the oldest granddaughter and in my belly was the oldest great-grandson. Grandfather's first son was born when he was already getting on in years; his first wife had been barren, and he had divorced her. He had long been jealous of his townsfolk who, in their fifties, were already bringing grandchildren to the wedding canopy. He was fifteen years late, but his turn had come. I was healthy and beautiful, and would give birth in two months. Matchmakers were knocking on the doors of my sisters, my cousins, and their daughters. The coin plate was fuller than ever before. Refreshing, renewing air burst vigorously through the open window.

SUDDENLY, the largest lamp in the room went out and a stranger in costume entered the house. A weird trembling passed through the hearts of all the guests. Usually we were able to recognize the identity of those in costume by the way they walked, their gestures, or their voices. This one we did not know. He was dressed in black, an old fur hat on his head, his face powdered with white flour. His lips and mustache were as red as blood. His arms were longer than those of a mortal. We tried to lighten our first impression with false chuckles, but our laughter was not returned. He looked around and peered at every one of us with a piercing glare; then he started to do a strange dance, twitching and jerking forward. In between each movement he emitted noises from his throat that sounded like cats, dogs, jackals, and hyenas. One boy began to cry. Even the adults turned pale. We weren't able to make a sound. Our trembling hands grabbed the table, and a disturbing thought struck our hearts: how will we ever rid ourselves of this bearer of bad tidings?

Finally he stopped his dance. Instead of approaching the coin plate, he went to the tables, grabbed a roast chicken from one place and a slice of *hallah* from another, devoured them, laughed out loud, and left. We were so shocked and dumbfounded, our mouths fell open as his laughter filled the house with tremors and shook our hearts.

Laughter ceased for the night. We were too scared to speak about the stranger in costume, who we feared was not just another of the poor Safedites. Pale and quiet, we finished the feast. My fingers shook, and the movements of the child in my stomach seemed unsettled and strange. It seemed as if something were tearing from deep down inside. A painful chill flowed under my heart. I wrapped myself in a warm woollen shawl and walked step by step beside the tall, slightly bent frame of your father, peace be with him. I wanted to tell him something with all my heart, to speak, to tell him however briefly what was inside me. But I did not dare open a conversation just like that: we were still embarrassed to initiate discussions. Only in the most urgent instances did we say anything directly. We almost always communicated through a third person.

I looked at his broad shoulders and at the darkened blue of the changing sky, and for a moment it seemed that a group of stars had assumed the shape of the stranger's face. I wanted to tell him that, and then my foot slipped and I fell flat on my face on the sharp stones. Darkness swirled around my brain, and I did not even feel the touch of your father's hand as he lifted me from the ground.

THE day after the festival, my left breast was terribly swollen. The pain was so great that I could not close my eyes the entire night. I stifled my weeping so as not to disturb your father's sleep. Only after he went to the study house in the morning did I approach Grandfather and tell him everything. He put on his glasses and checked the spot that was sore. His face became pale. His lips trembled, especially when he connected the chain of events with the stranger in costume. Professional pride notwithstanding, he was afraid to treat the sore breast himself. He pursed his lips and wrote a note in

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proper Latin. You're surprised that Grandfather, who never left Safed, knew Latin? That's a story in itself, and one doesn't mix up stories. I took the note to the new doctor in town, who went around with his head uncovered and spoke to his patients in Hebrew rather than in Yiddish. This doctor was a *halutz*, a Zionist pioneer, and his patients came from the settlement of Rosh Pina as well as from the "enlightened" circles of Safed itself. He used to love to make fun of us, telling us strange stories and trying to press heretical books into our hands. Thus we were usually wary of him and stayed away from his house. Now I approached him trembling. He was free and smiling. He read out the Latin message in the singsong of a Talmud student, and laughed. But when he examined my breast, his laughter disappeared. A strange illness. A strange sore. He examined my breast and examined again. Then he wrote in a thick book for a long time.

From then on, I used to cross the length of Safed every day to the new doctor. He did not like me very much to begin with, as I did not want to speak Hebrew. I laughed at and ridiculed his stories, and refused to take the books he offered me. But after a while our relationship changed, and he stopped speaking to me like a heretic. He was amazed at my resistance to pain, as not even a faint cry passed my lips all the time he probed my sore which constantly discharged both blood and pus. "Daughter of Valor" he used to call me in front of the women of Rosh Pina. They wondered at my closely cropped hair, my pretty face, my intent stubbornness.

I had never seen so much of Safed as I did in those days. I had generally stayed indoors, like a proper, well-bred daughter. We particularly avoided leaving the house on the days between Passover and Lag B'Omer, the festival when pilgrims gathered on nearby Mount Meron at the tomb of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai. Among them would be many from Yemen, Persia, and other far-off lands. There was a story that one young man from some distant country grabbed a young girl of ours and wed her, with a ring and witnesses, in the middle of the street. From then on, the girls of Safed, particularly the pretty ones, were afraid to leave their homes during these days. I, however, was already married, so I could allow myself to walk leisurely, looking at the Yemenites and their families, whom the people of Safed slandered by saying that anything that came into their hands they hid in their clothes, and that you had to check every movement of theirs with seven eyes.

There were wealthy Jews from Bukhara who used to rent an entire courtyard and spread carpets on the floor. They'd bring out cooking utensils the size of wash basins and use them for frying, baking, roasting. The smell of the meat and the burning fat filled the whole town. I watched the Christian tourists who pitched their white, steeply-angled tents on the slope of the hill. They would walk the streets dressed in white, with hats that looked like pots turned upside down. Their pockets were filled with coins and their women were tall, withered, and ugly. Then there were Bedouin, dressed in their wide robes, who greased their long black braids with sparkling oil, and carried flutes in their hands. The sound of their flutes would arouse hidden, heartfelt fears and send shivers up the spine. Along with the pilgrims came the usual motley crowd of salvation-seekers and those looking for God, who had wandered on their way for weeks and months and who now gathered in Safed to go forth to the grave of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai on the day of Lag B'Omer.

THE Jerusalemites were honorably represented. They came in groups of thirty and forty. Your father's family came in a select group. They were from the most notable people of Jerusalem, the grandchildren of Rabbi David Milelov and other noteworthy personages. They planned these pilgrimages even before Passover, and a festive atmosphere generally suffused the journey. That feeling was especially strong this year because they had set down roots in Safed; they had brought about our union that year. Unlike previously, the group was joined by some women from the family. They were curious to see your father in his new life.

They had rented a caravan of mules. It took three days to get them from Jerusalem to Safed; they were delayed by their frequent stops at the graves of holy rabbis, and also the spoiled Jerusalem girls did not know how to ride properly. The muledrivers who accompanied and guarded the caravans had to set the women aright each time they slipped off their mounts. The merry ones of Safed used to joke that when a Jerusalem girl rode, only her right hand and left leg were tied to the mule, so that the drivers would not have to touch her in forbidden places when they righted her. Others added that the real reason was so that the drivers could find them when they slipped off because the girls were known to be so small and frail.

The men in the group conversed the whole way. They entertained themselves with stories of the righteous or with chapters from the mystical book of the Zohar, written by Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai himself. What can I tell you? Our family had never before been accorded so much joy and honor as when the Jerusalem caravan arrived. All the good and pious men of Safed gathered in Grandfather's house to listen to discussions of the Torah and the wise conversation of the guests from Jerusalem. Your father became a different person. He clung to each and every member of his family and asked over and over again about the smallest details of every infant, every street and crossroad in his birthplace. I was scrutinized seven times over by the piercing, sparkling eyes of the women from Jerusalem. For the first time in my life, I saw a

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Jerusalem woman close up. I must admit I did not like them much. They had sour faces, and were too proud and spoiled. . . .

Safed had not had such a festive Lag B'Omer in many years. The shopkeepers' cash drawers were overflowing. Stores ran out of goods. Caravan after caravan of camels and mules brought the best, most expensive wares from Damascus; as soon as they reached Safed they turned back, weary as they were, to fetch more. Musicians from Tiberias passed through the outskirts of town with music and song. The pioneers from Rosh Pina came bareheaded and barelegged to sing and dance and celebrate in the heart of the city. The wealthy folk from Bukhara wore clothing embroidered with silver and gold, blinding the curious eyes of the locals. The Yemenites, in their coarse voices, chanted verses from the Zohar. Even the elders of Safed, who loved to talk about the magnificence of past events, were forced to admit that a crowd like this had never been seen in the city before.

On the afternoon of the day before Lag B'Omer. . . . Do you know my uncle's house, at the end of the street overlooking Mount Meron? I was standing by the window in that very house. All the crowds passed under the window. In front marched a group carrying an ancient Torah scroll beneath an equally old wedding canopy. After them came the wealthy Bukharans and other notables waiting to pay for the privilege of carrying the Torah a few steps. The musicians played a different tune for every change in the procession. Many groups of musicians had joined together to make a huge orchestra, with close to a hundred violins, trumpets, and drums. The tunes were old, familiar to everyone. We were so elated when all of the instruments, spontaneously and in unison, played the special Lag B'Omer tune, "Bar Yohai, your gladness anointed." Children, like goats drunk from the sun, leaped at the sound of the tune. Adults broke out of their inhibitions—they danced wildly, twisting their bodies in strange movements. Tremors shook my back and shoulders. I was reminded of all the experiences that made my heart throb. This is how I felt every year, seeing people intoxicated by the special effect of Meron, by the cold which encircled your body at dawn when neighboring Arabs came with their flocks and squeezed their milk into the cups of those who had yet to fall asleep, by the refreshing sight of the stream of water which flowed between the two mountains by the grave of the sainted rabbi, and by the sleepy inebriation which filled one's soul as one stared at the flames of the great bonfire. My eyes became warm. When I saw the long chain of people coming down the twisted pathway toward Meron, I could not stop crying. I cried and I did not know why.

THAT night I slept alone for the first time in my life. Your father went down to Meron with the Jerusalem group, while it was still light. They took a short cut across the cemetery because they could not stand the noisy crowds. They thought it was blasphemous. The anniversary of Bar Yohai's death was a day when a man's blood was open to absorb the sacred sounds of the Zohar. They would silently enter the room where the bones of the holy one were buried and pour out their hearts in whispers, with modesty and trembling. Only at nightfall would the others come, people who conversed loudly, the same way they prayed, who prayed the way they studied, and who studied the way they recited the Zohar. When they chanted the Zohar, their screams could deafen. When they arrived, your father's family would get up and leave very quietly so as not to embarrass the screamers. They would then gather in a special room they had rented, and continue there what they had not finished at the tomb. They would not even go out for the great bonfire, but stand in their room and cast pained glances over toward the light. I'm a simple woman and it's hard for me to repeat what they said, but if they said these exact words, then certainly it can't be sinful. They said . . . that it was a pagan practice. . . .

Anyway, I slept alone in my room. The sound of the musicians and singers was carried like a distant voice which seemed to come from the heart of whoever heard it. Even the baby in my womb jumped differently. My breast ached. I closed my eyes and tried to sleep. From everywhere I heard and felt the seductive "Bar Yohai, your gladness anointed."

At that time I dreamed a strange dream. I saw myself at Grandfather's house. Hundreds of people had their mouths open and Grandfather was pressing on their tongues with a silver spoon. All on its own, a great feather swabbed, and swabbed again. Suddenly, the costumed stranger came, opened his mouth, and laughed with his mouth agape. The silver spoon in Grandfather's hand fell to the stone floor, the feather stopped, hesitated, and then shook. Immediately the laugh twisted into the tune of "Bar Yohai." Everyone's face paled as the man in costume sang, approached me, felt my stomach, laughed again, and said, "I'm there, my laugh is there, I'm holy, I'm pure, I'm alive, I'm dead."

I awoke with a nightmarish scream. No one came to help me. All the homes in the neighborhood were empty. Their tenants had gone down to Meron. I turned up the flame of the lamp and looked for the only small mirror in the house. I wanted to see the face of someone alive, my own face. I was so alone at that moment. My face had a blue pallor and my eyes were wide. I returned to my bed with clenched teeth and started to think about the dream and how to interpret it. You know me, I'm no fanatic like those women who run to interpreters every time they have a dream. But my experience has taught me that just as a person sometimes sees his past while awake, a person can sometimes see his future while asleep. I felt that some fate had been de-

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creed for my family, and that I would be the one to suffer for them. It was no accident that the stranger had pointed to my stomach. I began to fear for the child in my belly. My own childish mind whispered ominously: anything that comes in excess—ends in disaster. We had been indulged with the best of everything. Here I was, carrying, as my debt, the seed of the future. Three years later, with the outbreak of World War I, my prophecy was fulfilled in a way that I could not possibly have imagined.

BUT let's get back to the story. I was lying there, my whole body trembling. I fell asleep for a short while and then awoke to think more of my feverish thoughts. Just then I heard the sound of footsteps and a knock on the door. A half-recognizable, hurried voice excitedly shouted out the names of my relatives and said they were alive and well. When I tried to get to the door, I could hear the footsteps already fading away. I was shaken. My childish imagination whispered that it was the voice of the stranger. I took a sacred book from the closet and pressed it to my heart. I hoped the power of its sanctity would enable me to sleep. But a little while later came another voice and more footsteps . . . and the same words were repeated.

I was young and timid. I did not even dare approach the door. I pressed the book to my heart all the harder, and strained to fall asleep. In my broken sleep I heard voices repeating the news that my family was well. It was close to morning when I awoke. Strange sounds floated over the empty streets. The lamp was out and the blue dawn shone in through the window. I put on a warm dress and went out to the corner. Nothing seemed different. My breast ached, and walking was difficult for me. For a moment, I thought that my fears were merely imaginary, and I was about to return home when I heard a broken voice weeping. I ran until I reached the foot of the hill where the pathway led to Meron. Many people stood crowded together, trembling and sobbing. People were going up the hill, heads lowered, carrying stretchers upon which lay the quiet bodies of the wounded and the dead.

I learned the details of the catastrophe from the weeping onlookers. Do you know the roof of the synagogue of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai? The large railing that surrounds it and the inclines going up and down? On that very roof hundreds of people had been crowded together. They wanted to be close to the giant flame. They always said that people standing there, even for a few moments, became "transfixed." The wealthy Bukharans, usually calm and self-possessed, would throw silk and silver and gold vessels into the fire. An English tourist once threw handfuls of banknotes into the flames. Understandably, there was too large a crowd on the roof that night. Even the railing, against which hundreds of bodies were pressing, was very shaky. They said that the Sephardi "sages" had been warned of the imminent danger but paid no attention; the Sephardi aristocrats spent a great deal of money to be near the sacred tomb, and they were known to be frugal.

The catastrophe itself was slow and cruel. The people saw it happening and could not stop it. First the railing bent downward, and the people standing near it hung in the empty space. As the stones started to crumble and fall, the first victims began to scream even while the others were still dancing and singing, completely unaware of the danger they were in. After the first sounds of the collapse, an eerie silence fell. The end came in full force with a cold, assured cruelty. Bodies were crushed, brains splattered, the pools of blood kept growing wider and wider. They said that the screaming and wailing were audible all the way to Safed, even though I had heard no clear sounds. During the first moments of confusion, people were concerned for the safety of their relatives. Everyone ran about wildly, and there were cries of joy as well as of fear. In those days there was no ambulance service and no doctors close by. The dead and the wounded lay in one heap and it was nearly dawn before two doctors came from Safed. Only then did they begin to transfer the wounded to the city on stretchers.

I CANNOT remember a sadder day in Safed. During the war, which came later, when typhus and famine killed dozens of people every day, our hearts became hardened. But back then we were like babies, completely innocent, and we felt the shock of the sudden end of the celebration as the city became wrapped in weeping. Even though none of our family was hurt, I cried that day as I had never cried before. Everyone knew everyone else, their strengths and weaknesses. The people of Safed were used to sharing their miseries and their joys. Women were so close that they could taste the food in one another's pots and, at mealtime, they knew how many courses each was serving. A person's pain was transmitted to his friends, and by the friends to their friends, until in a very short time all of Safed was talking about one person's troubles. It was that way with everything.

Now just imagine! Over fifty people from Safed alone were killed in the catastrophe, and a hundred were still fluttering between life and death. All those killed and wounded were as close to us as our own flesh. Oh, the poor people! They cried without knowing why. They recited Psalms in the synagogues. They declared a public fast. They blamed the catastrophe on the fact that women were mixed together with men at the holy tomb, and on that day they decreed that women could no longer go down to Meron on Lag B'Omer. Scribes wrote hurried pleas to Jews abroad, asking for money. . . .

I connected these events with the weird incident with the stranger. I felt that he was the cause of the trouble. That's what I felt, but I said noth-

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ing lest people laugh at me. I felt that the hungry man in the costume who entered our house, so full of light, and grabbed the roast chicken, had come for a reason. In Safed there were dozens of hungry people, half of whom were crazy. Sometimes, instead of relieving the hunger of these miserable folk with leftovers from our meals, we used their wretched lives as material for jokes at weddings and such occasions. I was young, a mere child, but still and all I felt what others didn't. . . .

THE day after the catastrophe, I did not go to the doctor to change the bandage on my breast. The doctor was busy with the many wounded and I was caught up in the mournful atmosphere. A day later, when my pain became unbearable, I went to his house, but I did not find him there. I had to trace his steps to the Rothschild Hospital, whose building, still unfinished, was being used for the wounded. He was too busy to see me, but he ordered me to stay in the hospital among the wounded; during his rounds, he would take care of me as well. Since I was about to give birth in a few days, he felt that I should stay. It would be better to give birth in the hospital than at home.

It was hard to get my mother, or me, to agree to this arrangement. We could not imagine that a woman wouldn't feel embarrassed to give birth in public. But, having no choice, we finally consented. They arranged a room for me, overlooking a garden. That was so I would not hear the cries of the wounded and their relatives. Meanwhile my mother prepared everything needed for the birth, including amulets to keep away the destructive spirits. They dressed me in a long, white robe. That is how I was forced to lie alone in a room where the walls had yet to be plastered and the window had no pane to keep out the weather. I felt that the ache in my breast was getting stronger. I anticipated the moment of birth with the natural impatience of a woman who was experiencing it for the first time.

That day, for the first time in my life, I saw a woman with long gray-streaked hair. She wore a white wraparound apron; her face was tanned, and her hair was shoulder length. Her eyes jarred and moved nervously. Her lips were thin and pale and her earlobes were pierced but empty. She was the first nurse in Safed. It seems she came with one of the groups of pioneers. I had never seen a sane person behave like her. She talked to herself in Russian and, when she thought no one was looking, she would jab a handkerchief between her eyes. For some reason, she liked me. Just two hours after I was in the hospital, she was sitting beside my bed. She sat close to me, and without any warning, she caressed and hugged me, her thin, pale lips kissing my neck. She flooded me with words, in a mixture of Hebrew and Russian. She told me things that were incomprehensible. She didn't behave like a woman. She made me feel troubled. To put it simply, I was scared of her. I told her I didn't understand Hebrew, even though two years before I had secretly studied two Hebrew books carefully with my cousin. I do not know how I found the courage to lie to her. I thought it would keep her away from me, but she seemed to cling to me even more. She said she didn't care if I understood her or not. A tremor of nausea passed through me when her hand came in contact with my flesh. When Mother came to visit, I cried for her to take me home. She, however, was European and believed in doctors. She settled me with comforting words and left. In the meantime, my sore breast became worse. My doctor then decided to arrange a consultation with two other doctors in the hospital.

I still remember clearly how they stood around me. They looked so strange. They joked and horsed around my bed as if the person in front of them weren't alive. One asked the nurse in Russian if I understood Hebrew. She said that I did not. Once again they joked about Safed women and their own dealings with them. Then they brought up the subject of the sore, as if it were a separate being, something one would find on a desert, but not on a breast. One doctor connected the sore with my pregnancy, and opined that my life might be in danger. They immediately gave me a thorough examination. They argued about the size of the baby. They measured, they felt. They recalled past experiences. They decided it would be impossible for me to give birth to this overgrown baby. During labor my heart would burst. They began to discuss the possibility of an operation that would at least save the baby's life. They argued about where they should cut, and decided they would operate when the contractions began. Once the decision was made their faces brightened and they began to joke again, as if these same mouths had not just decreed the moment of my death. I listened to their conversation without any sign of understanding. When they left the room, the contractions began. I saw before me the gleaming scalpel and the doctors' smiling faces, and I was afraid to cry out. The pain lasted about fifteen minutes; I kept it in. The nurse returned. There was a strange expression on her face, as if she were happy at the prospect of what was about to happen to me. She sat beside me as usual and began to hug and kiss me. This time she laughed a lot and let loose soft, frightening Russian words. At that moment, I decided to leave the hospital. I said to myself, if I must die—at least I'll die by my mother's side.

When the hospital grew quiet, the contractions started again. This time I bit my fingers till I drew blood, to overcome the pain. I got off the bed and opened the door a little. In the corner of the hall I saw a shadow move. I realized that I could not leave unseen through the door. I stuck my head out the window. It was dark. The olive trees swished silently. The ground seemed very far away. A cold sweat covered my body. I saw myself in a pile of crushed limbs, crying for help, and I

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was ready to go back to bed. At that moment there flickered before me a vision of those mad, nervous eyes of the nurse, kissing my newly dead face. I stood on the window ledge. I was dressed in a white gown and my feverish eyes saw the white cloth leaping. It's hard to recall what happened next. Vaguely I remember the stab of the sharp stones, the hot moisture on my palms, my bare feet, the feeling of the short hair on my uncovered head, the street dogs fleeing from the shock of seeing me, the sound of banging on my mother's door, and her frightened voice. Then I saw the familiar flame of the lamp rising quickly. Darkness fell over me and I sensed nothing but faint, distant sounds, the damp, hot water, and a choked voice.

Two hours later, I awoke. There was a great light in the house. Mother held a glass of hot milk in her trembling hands. The family walked around the bright room with deeply moved faces. The neighbors knocked and came in. The midwife laughed musically and briskly. Your father licked the ends of his sidecurls with an expression on his face that showed he was deep in thought. Everyone was asking me questions, but I was too weak and happy to answer. Then Grandfather came and asked me questions which were both meaningful and sensible. I answered truthfully. After a quarter of an hour, he got up and paced the room, saying to himself, "See how blind I was not to allow her to learn Hebrew. If she hadn't understood what they were saying, she would have stayed quietly in bed. The sore on her breast wouldn't have opened. The emotional trauma and the shock from the jump wouldn't have dislodged the baby from its narrow place. She would have perished. . . . Now, how great are heaven's mercies! How wonderful are the ways of the Creator!" He continued mumbling aloud verses and fragments of verses as if something were revealing itself to him. It was as though he had needed an incident like this, God forbid, to see the hand of Providence.

The doctors ran over in the morning. The sore on my breast had opened by itself. They stood by my bed, ashamed and bewildered. Grandfather pranced around the room, joyful and beaming as if celebrating his own personal victory. He spoke to them in Latin, ending his statement in a language we all understood. "*Nu*, is there a God or isn't there?" They did not know how to answer; they stuttered about the power of the will and other complex things which were totally incomprehensible. But Grandfather remained firm. "*Nu*, is there a God or isn't there?" I lay on my soft bed, radiating fulfillment at having publicly sanctified God's name.

My happiness was short-lived. When the baby was brought close to my breast, suddenly I began to tremble. How could I describe him? In Safed we didn't yet weigh people on scales. One weighed cattle, but not a person who had a soul and a spirit. Who would dare imagine such a possibility? So, because of this, I cannot tell you how much the baby weighed, but I am not exaggerating when I say that he was the size of a one-year-old. His face? —Master of the World, my eyes had never seen such a beauty. Since that time I've been to many European cities, and I used to love to look at the dolls in the display windows— No! . . . No man's hands could create a face like that—a complete, mature, well-balanced expression on a one-day-old baby's face; big, blue alert eyes whose sheer innocence could send shivers up your spine, and bring tears to your eyes. His silky, golden hair blurred the top of his large head and swirled in soft curls down to his full, round shoulders. His face had a reddish-white tinge to it, not like other babies who looked as if their faces had been cooked in boiling blood. His face had a simple, staid look which did not seem to move. If it had not been for the action of his eyes, blessed be the Merciful One, I'd have thought he was a doll with movable legs and arms. The strangest thing was—he didn't cry. After his first short bleat, no one heard his voice. It seemed that he was happy with this wretched world. What can I tell you? My heart wouldn't permit me to give him my healthy breast. I turned my face to the wall and cried as one who cries for the dead.

The news spread through Safed as quick as lightning. The story of my fleeing from the hospital with my nightgown on, and the story of my wonder child, caused them to forget about the terrible Lag B'Omer tragedy. On the streets, in every house, they talked about my special adventure, and each mouth added its own personal touch. Think how confused your father must have felt, peace be with him. He was a mere boy, only seventeen. Even when things were normal he was embarrassed by the fact that he had a wife and was part of that adult world. He was afraid to be seen with me in the street. He would hesitate before he called me by name. He used to address me by saying, "Did you hear?" If he was caught off-guard—for instance, if I met his glance as it wandered about my face, or if I caught his fingers playing with the strands of my shawl on the chair—he would blush like someone caught in the act of murder or some other terrible sin. The days before the birth had been awful for him. He was frightened of the public ceremony of the circumcision and of everything that came with it. Now everyone greeted him with a *mazel tov* and a pat on the back for having such a heroic wife. They asked how the wonder-child was, and how he looked, and even wanted to know about the Torah lessons that the baby gave. (Don't laugh! The people of Safed were already babbling about all the secrets of the Torah this wonder-child had revealed to several kabbalists.) It was as if your father had been stripped naked as he was born, and placed in a display window. That day he did not go to evening services, and for the first time in his life

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he did not pray with a quorum. The window of our room was right next to the open window of the study house, and he stayed in our room and prayed along with those praying there, answering Amen from where he stood.

The baby, it was discovered, had been born completely circumcised. The ritual circumciser came with two members of the religious court in order to decide what to do in this case. I looked as well, and my heart stopped from fear. I feared that the child was not created to live on this earth. My brain saw a chain of events leading from the appearance of the stranger in Grandfather's house to my escape from the hospital. I saw the hidden hand of Providence. What would you have thought? The child was unnaturally large. If my pregnancy had been normal, I would have perished in giving birth. The man in costume had caused the sore on my breast, and if the doctor had visited me at home as usual, I wouldn't have been saved from my fate. Then the tragedy happened at Meron, and I was forced to go to the hospital, and if it hadn't been for that strange nurse, I would have spoken Hebrew, and the doctors wouldn't have consulted in front of me, and I wouldn't have jumped from the high window. How many victims did this baby need? All for nothing. . . . I was totally dumbfounded. Would the death of the child be the logical outcome of this chain of incredible events? I did not know myself, in those days. At night, the stranger appeared again, frightening me, preying upon my sleep with his wild, threatening laugh.

The night before the circumcision ceremony, people gathered together. Lamps were lit. The room was filled with a light so bright it stung the eyes. A different spirit came over your father. Grandfather had been to see him, alone, and thereafter he appeared in public without any kind of discomfort. According to what I was told later, he began to feel the deep meaning of this *mitzvah*. The whole night he served his guests in joyful excitement. I had never seen him like that before. He ran to the study house to bring over more copies of the sacred Zohar. He brought plates of beans and nuts to the table and invited people to eat their fill. He extended his hand and nodded his head with restrained joy to the blessing of *mazel tov* and other good wishes. Between servings, he sat with everyone and chanted passages from the Zohar in a quivering voice. I could barely restrain myself from thrusting my head out of the curtain that surrounded my bed so that I might see his long frame bent over the Zohar. I've seen many celebrations of this type in my life, but such strong vibrations never shook anyone else's house as they did ours. The most pious men of Safed sat around the long table. Each was an accomplished scholar, well versed in wisdom and Kabbalah. They did not chatter idly as is done on similar occasions elsewhere. No laughter was heard. The chanting of the Zohar flowed slowly and surely.

Imagine how frightened we were when at midnight, the baby, whose tranquil face from the moment he was born had never stopped smiling, suddenly began to cry. He screamed with a scream rarely heard even in nightmares. Everyone jumped from his place. They tried to calm him. They passed him to me, and I tried to nurse him. They sang to him. They made funny gestures—all to no avail. He kept on crying until morning. The guests dispersed, clutched by some undefined fear. Your father walked around pale and shaking. They called the doctor in the morning, but he just shrugged. Of course the ceremony did not take place even though, according to the Law, only a drop of blood needed to be taken from him. The celebration was halted, and the great feast that had been prepared was distributed to the poor of Safed.

From that day on, the baby became paler and thinner by the hour. His cry was so quiet that he could be heard only if you bent over his cradle. His body shrank at a disquieting rate. It was hard to grasp where his flesh and bones were disappearing to. In the still of the night, when I heard his choked cry, my mad imagination envisioned that each moment of his crying whittled away another piece of his flesh and bone. I would see his face in my dreams, its movements, its textures coupled with the tones of his strange weeping.

It took seven days for him to separate himself from us. When I held his cold and stonelike body with trembling hands, he seemed like a baby chick that had had its feathers plucked—so light and so fragile. They made a small coffin for him, a toy coffin. I couldn't even cry when the undertaker lifted the box.

The days of summer were fraught with sadness and longing. An eerie dread had come over me. My breast healed completely. My body resumed its normal posture. My face retained its youthful sheen. Deep inside, however, I felt differently. I would work in the kitchen, do all the housework, and talk to the neighbors and the family. Nevertheless, when I found myself alone, a cold feeling overtook me. On those occasions, I saw nightmarish visions and awful voices whispered to me. Five years later, when I was to lie in the hospital among those afflicted with typhus, those same visions and sounds would return even more clearly. Then, everyone saw them with his own eyes, and did not need strange afflictions to prove how real they were. But during those earlier hours of solitude I was ashamed to tell anyone anything about what I thought. I kept everything inside me and would release it only in my wild dreams. Most of our dreams, you know, don't make sense, and usually confuse our sense of time. These dreams, however, made clear sense. The stranger would always appear at the beginning of the dream, and his spirit would hover over the dead and the wounded. I saw the face of the nurse. I heard the

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voices of the doctors, the dogs that ran away from me, the baby with its last choked cry, and at the end of the dream I would see my own face, hear my laugh as my heart shrank and tears strangled my throat. Then I would awaken, cry quietly, and take deep breaths.

You can laugh about the mystical amulets of women—but they're not just superstition. One day I melted some boiling lead and spilled it into a bowl of water which I held above my head, and I swear to you that as much as I prayed to stay with your father, peace be with him, the more the piece of lead came to resemble the stranger. The face laughed as if it were alive. . . . Even after the lead was melted down again, I couldn't rest. My dreams never stopped, and I had to smother my weeping with a pillow so as not to wake your father from his sleep.

Even in Grandfather's house, things happened which did not augur well. One morning, they found two milk goats dead without a sign of blood on their bodies. The grandchildren had loved the goats, and even I used to sneak quietly into their dark pen and pet their warm, smooth necks. And then again, that same week, thieves broke into the house, opened a large chest, and stole jewelry which was worth several hundred Napoleons. There were many suspects brought to the Turkish police station, but the thieves were never caught, not even to this day.

Grandfather was despondent. His large eyes wandered with an undefined fear, and we could see his beard become whiter by the hour. Sometimes he locked himself up in the attic and his voice, saturated with pain and longing, uttering verses from the Psalms, would fill the whole house. At those times, he would not even take money from sick Arabs. Between throat swabs and eye examinations, he would bring his aged hands near the cheek and neck of the sick baby, and stroke and stroke its flesh. Whenever he saw my trembling shoulders he would summon me with that same warm look and hug my kerchiefed head with his large, vital hands, stroke and stroke me until my eyes became warm and my heart knew a tranquillity it had not known before. I was never closer to Grandfather than in those days.

Your father's face, which had filled out a bit from the fresh Safed air and the good food of our house, became thin and pallid once more. Yet he was never so handsome as in those days. His clear beard and its silken hairs gave off a special aroma, a festive odor from the kiss of the golden strands on the pallor of his cheeks. His side curls were so round, so full, so alive, that when he turned his head away from me I could actually feel them in the dark space of his passing shadow. His tall frame bent slightly with a grace of loving-kindness that could tear your heart in two. When he entered the house I felt the air vibrate, and my heart beat in a soft understanding rhythm. But he was rarely at home. As soon as the sexton called out in the morning summoning him to the service of the Creator, he would jump from his bed, wash his hands, dress hurriedly, take his prayershawl and phylacteries, and a towel, and run to the ritual bath. At ten in the morning he entered the house like a man whose ships had been lost at sea; pressed for time, he would eat some cake, drink a cup of coffee, and run back to the study house. It was the same in the afternoon. He studied with the old people. The young married men used to spend their time in idle chatter, but in the old people's study house they sat preparing for Judgment Day each and every hour, and they had the fear of heaven constantly before them.

Your father was a strange man, peace be with him. It was as if he knew he would die in his twenty-third year. He felt his place was with those who were about to leave this world. At every opportunity, he would remind himself that the time which passed would never return. At night he would spend a long time looking at his lovely hands. He would move them about as if they had a life of their own, wrap his face in them, and shake his shoulders. Then he would chant with a full voice in the pitch-black room, "Yosef, Yosef, what did you do today?" "Yosef, Yosef, what can your soul give to your Creator tonight?" When I heard him say these things, I trembled with anger. What kind of outburst was this? I had never seen anything like it, in Grandfather's house or in Father's. Ah! I was a foolish baby during those years. . . .

The day came when I had to purify myself in the ritual bath like a Jewish daughter. I was afraid. The stranger in costume still frightened me in my dreams. Your father had sunk into study more deeply than ever. Grandfather locked himself in his room more often, continuously chanting Psalms. I felt all alone, ashamed before my mother, my grandmother, and myself. Days passed and nothing happened. Then one day I felt the large, hesitant hand of Grandfather resting on my neck. I looked at his questioning eyes, then I shook my head and began to cry. Grandfather's face became serious and his expression sobered as he whispered again and again: "It's not good, my daughter. It's not good." In the afternoon, I saw him and your father returning from the study house together. His large hand was on your father's shoulder as they spoke hesitatingly and solemnly.

That night, forgetting myself, I took hold of your father's living hand. We were like two children imprisoned together in a strange place. We had nothing to say to each other. One had seen too much into the heart of the other. I heard him call out my name for the first time. Later, when the cold sleep latched onto my eyes, my dreams free and sun-drenched, I heard your voice, my son, a voice with your father's quiver in it, and I saw your blue eyes that wrapped themselves in a slight, distant dreaminess, exactly like the expression in your eyes now.

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Books in Review

Politics and Disease

THE APOCALYPTICS: CANCER AND THE BIG LIE. By EDITH EFRON. *Simon & Schuster. 589 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by SAMUEL MCCRACKEN

AMONG the many remarkable qualities of this book about cancer science is the back of the dust jacket. It is not unusual to find in this space highly favorable comments by distinguished readers who have seen a book before its publication, and Miss Efron's book is no exception: "A sensation . . . displays a dazzling technical mastery of the field that I would not expect of anyone but a professional cancer scientist. . . ." "A masterful work. It is difficult to believe that anyone (layperson or professional) could organize and interpret the literature on this subject so logically and present it so thoughtfully. . . ." And so forth. Yet in my experience it is without precedent that such comments should be made, as they are here, anonymously. Miss Efron's pre-publication reviewers are identified on the jacket not by name but only by professional specialty.

When we turn to her preface we learn the reason for this, and it is an extraordinary one. Although a number of scientific reviewers were willing to speak publicly and favorably about Miss Efron's survey of the basic science behind the cancer problem, none who reviewed her devastating conclusions about the way this science has been applied was willing to have his name attached to his opinion. To do so, they said, would turn them into professional pariahs and damage or perhaps even destroy their careers. So Miss Efron has been led to a remarkable expedient: she has deposited copies of their signed reviews both with her publisher and with several academics serving, so to speak, as men of honor; for her readers she contents herself with describing their professional qualifications. This prologue to the tale she tells in her book proper is, in its own way, further evidence of the collapse of the scientific method in the United States.

Proceeding to treat her main theme—the politicizing of cancer prevention—Miss Efron traces two interrelated chains of development. The first is the growth of the now widespread belief that nature is benevolent, human artifice malevolent. This notion, given its original currency by Rachel Carson, was sped along by Barry Commoner and taken up by dozens of emulators; in its present received version, it contends that human artifice is at its most vicious when embodied in the work of large corporations.

The second chain is itself made up of two strands: one is the process by which scientists have been striving to learn the causes of cancer; the other is the process by which the federal government has used the findings of these scientists to control the activities of business and industry. Miss Efron calls the first process basic science, the second regulatory science, a term she invests with more than a touch of the oxymoronic.

In demolishing the idea that nature is a benign system into which wicked humans have pumped a great many evil chemicals that can cause cancer, Miss Efron lists hundreds of substances and processes *in nature* that give rise to carcinogens. These go back nearly to the Creation—it has been discovered that dinosaurs suffered from bone cancer—and are everywhere: radiation in the atmosphere, carcinogenic metals in the earth's crust, carcinogenic elements in the air and sea. Oxygen itself is a suspected carcinogen and a proved mutagen. Eight other elements required for life have been reported to be carcinogenic. Moreover, nearly a fifth of the elements in the universe are suspected carcinogens.

Wherever we turn, Miss Efron writes, there are reported carcinogens: all plants and trees contain them. Many of our foods, both vegetable and animal, are said to be carcinogenic. The human body itself produces several carcinogens from non-carcinogenic materials. Insulin—yes, insulin—has been reported to be carcinogenic. Blood contains a number of naturally radioactive substances which in their sum guarantee that the average body experiences some 500,000 radioactive disintegrations a minute. Far from being the invention of a chemical industry introducing manifold poisons into a naturally healthful biosphere, carcinogens appear to be even more natural than apple pie.

Miss Efron takes us next through an account of contemporary research into the mechanism of carcinogenesis. Much of the packed detail need not concern us here; the bottom line is that the area is still in a state of flux and that we do not *know* what causes cancer. For one thing, carcinogenesis appears to be highly specific to species: what causes cancer in mice does not necessarily cause cancer in rats. For another thing, although scientists have reported hundreds upon hundreds of chemicals to be carcinogenic in animals, only a handful have been identified through epidemiological studies to be carcinogenic in man. And some of those that have been shown to be carcinogenic in man have not been shown to be carcinogenic in any other animal. Actually, the notion that substances which in large doses can cause genetic mutations in bacteria are probably also carcinogenic in man depends on three untested levels of extrapolation: from small doses to large doses, from bacteria to animals, and from animals to man.

MISS EFRON'S rigorous survey of the state of basic cancer research thus shows a field in ferment, riddled with uncertainty and controversy. Yet the *regulatory* scientists —those responsible for the enforcement of the Toxic Substances Control Act—behave as if science had

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provided a firm substratum of knowledge for the close and constant regulation of human behavior. In doing so they rely on a whole series of dogmatic assumptions that have themselves never been proved and for which there is substantial contradictory evidence.

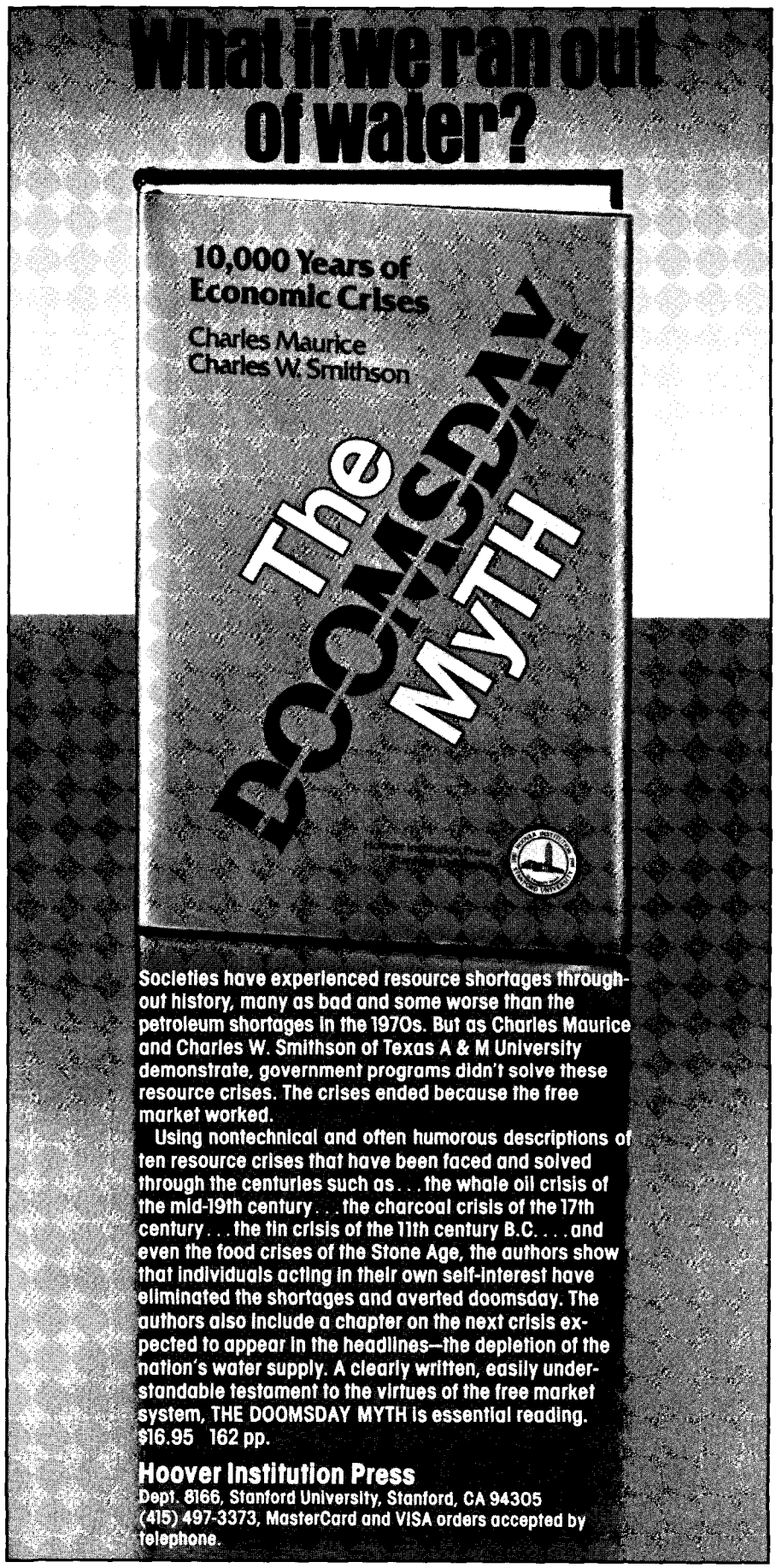
One of these is the notion that there is no safe dose of a dangerous chemical. This idea is confuted by such obvious data as medicines which are life-saving in small doses but fatal in large ones. It is also confuted by more recondite data. Regulatory science in its extreme form believes in the "single-hit" theory, i.e., that a single radioactive particle striking a single molecule in the body can initiate cancer. While there is no way to prove or disprove this, the fact that all people experience trillions of radioactive disintegrations within their bodies but most people never contract cancer suggests that a successful "single hit" must be an extremely rare occurrence.

Another notion beloved of regulatory scientists is that we are experiencing an epidemic of cancer. Yet no such thing has happened. When cancer rates are corrected for age (the population is getting older, and cancer is predominantly a disease of maturity and age), all cancers but respiratory ones are seen to be stable or declining slightly in incidence.

But the master dubious assumption, and the one with the most devastating impact, has been the belief that, since cancer is supposedly caused largely by industrial chemicals, most cancer can be prevented by identifying industrial carcinogens and excluding them from the environment. Billions of dollars and thousands of minds that might better have been spent on the treatment of cancer have been wasted on the pursuit of this chimerical theory of prevention.

Miss Efron's final conclusion is harsh:

> Were a physician to treat a patient for ten years by terrorizing him incessantly with hypothetical or false warnings of threats to his life, while failing to inform him of, and to treat, the known diseases from which the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The Jew from Prague

THE NIGHTMARE OF REASON: A LIFE OF FRANZ KAFKA. By ERNST PAWEL. *Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 466 pp. $25.50.*

Reviewed by RUTH R. WISSE

FRANZ KAFKA is the Byron of our century: a writer who fixes for his audience its image of *the* writer, as well as of the age that both created and consumed him. The ages, of course, could not be more disparate. In the 19th century the name of Byron, cloaked in dashing melancholy, brought into the language an image of romantic individuality defying even the experience of political disillusionment. A century later the adjective Kafkaesque, signifying the throttling of individuality by political bureaucracy, has turned Byronism around and rendered it obsolete.

That Lord Byron should have become in his day a hero of biographical inquiry is no more than what might have been expected as a consequence of his enterprise and his temperament; but what shall we say of Kafka, a man whose life was exceptional in its resistance to experience and adventure? A European Jew who died where he was born, who held the same job for fifteen years, who traveled only on business or vacation, who never married, and who moved only briefly out of his parents' home—all this would seem less an inspiration than an antidote to biography. But it is, indeed, just this unconsummated and repressed quality in Kafka that has proved so intriguing to a psychologically-oriented age. As interest has shifted from action to analysis, from behavior to motive, Byron's exploits come to seem less absorbing than Kafka's copiously documented inhibitions. Though Kafka himself felt humiliated and saddened by his incapacity to lead a robust life, this very failure has fortified his status as a stand-in for some central quality in 20th-century experience.

Kafka's latest biographer, Ernst Pawel, recognizes how threatening this Kafka mythology is to any balanced understanding of the man, yet for him too Kafka is more than a writer: he is the visionary seer of "our own post-Auschwitz universe, on the brink of extinction." For Pawel the connection between Kafka, who died in Prague of tuberculosis of the larynx in June 1924, and the death factory of Auschwitz is more than a stretched metaphor. His book about this Czech Jew, born in the unstable Austro-Hungarian empire of the late 19th century, takes pointed note of the birth in that same place and time of the "sickly infant," Adolf Hitler, and of the many contemporaneous events and ideas that shaped that unlikely leader's rise to power.

Similarly, Pawel often relies on a kind of foreshadowing that, for instance, makes the Final Solution implicit in the anti-Semitism of Kafka's experience. Even the book's dedication—to the memories of Kafka's sister, Ottla, and his good friend, the Czech writer Milena Jesenská—emphasizes the link between Kafka and the fate that overtook the European Jews. Ottla divorced her Aryan husband, was deported to Terezin, and then volunteered to escort a children's transport to Auschwitz. Milena Jesenská participated in the underground effort to rescue Jews during the Nazi occupation until her arrest by the Gestapo; she died at Ravensbruck concentration camp shortly before its liberation.

But if Pawel, haunted by what became of Europe, has thus written a pre-Holocaust biography, for the most part he remains determined to bring the symbolic Kafka

RUTH R. WISSE *teaches Yiddish literature at McGill University. She is co-editor (with Irving Howe and Khone Shmeruk) of the forthcoming* Penguin Book of Yiddish Poetry.

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down to human proportions. He insists that Kafka was, "for better or worse: a Jew from Prague," and gives us the social and cultural substance of that city in so much detail that, before considering what set the young Kafka apart from his contemporaries, we are bound to take cognizance of what he had in common with them. Before sending the boy to school, for example, Pawel first describes the transformation of Jewish education in the Hapsburg empire, the special conflicts of German-speaking Jews in a Czech-speaking population, and the location and characteristics of the elementary school Kafka attended.

Pawel's account of the quandary faced by the Bohemian Jews shows an insider's grasp of its complexity. For the newly emancipated Jews of the Hapsburg empire, many of whom had, like Kafka's father, grown up in terrible rural squalor, the removal of discriminatory restrictions in the mid-19th century offered a chance to build a secure and prosperous life. No sacrifice of energy or concentration was too great to secure this goal.

Unfortunately for the Jews of Prague, the Czechs and the Germans had competing interests, which brought them into increasingly bitter conflict over language, education, social advancement, cultural opportunity, and political allegiance. The only thing they seemed to share was a distrust of the Jews. Thus, however attracted the uprooted Jewish middle class may have been to the prospect of assimilation, it could not effectively identify with either the Czechs or the Germans without giving grave offense to the other; since the balance of power kept shifting between these two, the offense was inevitably to both. Kafka grew up in a family no longer authentically bound to its traditions, between two competing cultures that claimed his interest and even his allegiance, but neither of which he could ever make his own.

PAWEL's book, rich in social history, does not neglect the psychological development of his subject, and, indeed, brings fresh ideas to what had seemed a thoroughly exhausted inquiry. Pawel slightly shifts the emphasis away from the theme of the overbearing father, suggesting that it was the intensity of the union between Kafka's parents rather than the tyranny of Hermann Kafka alone that crippled the boy in his childhood. So devoted was the wife—helping in the family store by day, playing cards with her husband almost every night—that she neglected her infant son, and set the pattern for a lifetime's feelings of inadequacy and helpless rage. The death of his two infant brothers when he was only four years old and "wildly resentful of their intrusion on his mother's attention" must also have left him "with a burden of guilt too heavy ever to acknowledge." Pawel does not force these interpretations on the reader, but they are too persuasive to be ignored.

The book is particularly engaging when it introduces Kafka's circle of intimates, and also when explaining the nature of his work over the years at the Prague branch of a large insurance company. Hypercritical of himself as a writer (he consigned many manuscripts to the flames during his lifetime and asked that the rest be burned after his death), Kafka appears to have been an exemplary employee, taking occasional satisfaction from a job well done. The biography also softens the image of Kafka as a neurotic recluse by offering a fuller record than we have so far had of both his casual and his serious involvements with women. It seems clear that toward the end of his life he was able to form deep and mature attachments to Milena Jesenská and to the nineteen-year-old Dora Diamant, the daughter of a Polish hasidic household whom he met in a sanatorium and with whom he shared his last, probably happiest year.

PAWEL is least convincing in his discussion of Kafka as a writer—though this, presumably, is the main reason for interest in the life. Naturally he records the main facts of Kafka's literary development—the long, difficult nights

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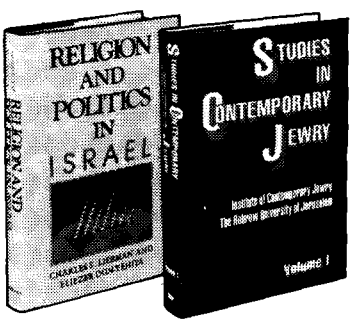

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of writing after days of numbing work; the breakthrough of the story, "The Judgment," written in feverish joy during the course of a single night; the fitful work over the novels, *Amerika*, *The Trial*, and *The Castle*, which remained unfinished and were only published posthumously by Kafka's loyal friend and literary executor, Max Brod. But though he provides a reliable account of Kafka's progress as an author, Pawel does not seem quite at home in assessing it.

Attempting to analyze the work as literature, Pawel abandons his straightforward prose and wallows in phraseology like this: "Already in this early effort, the opposites coexist, suspended in permanent paradox, relentlessly exerting their gravitational pull on mere humans trapped in the field of contending forces." Time and again he warns against interpretations of the work that are too narrow or dogmatic, but his own comments are open-ended to the point of inanity. "There is no single solution to the enigma," he writes of *The Trial*:

> There is, in fact, no enigma, but a dazzling interplay of multifaceted meanings whose unraveling becomes itself a vital first step along a road that has no end in human experience, as Kafka himself was forced to recognize when he finally had to abandon both Joseph K. and his novel to their fate.

Evidently Pawel does not feel as comfortable with these works as he does with their author; rather than examining the source of his own unease, he takes refuge in diffidence before acknowledged greatness.

But perhaps Kafka abandoned *The Trial* for much the same reason that many a reader falters: namely, that its hero, Joseph K., arouses so little sympathy or curiosity. There are many readers who wish that Jane Austen had completed *Persuasion*, but does anyone care that we have only a truncated version of *The Trial*?

In her study of Kafka, the psychoanalyst, Marthe Robert, discusses the "extreme measure" that Kafka took as a writer when he decided to adopt a neutral attitude toward his own emotional struggle:

> Not that Kafka . . . spoke of subject matter other than himself—on the contrary, he was his only subject; but Kafka the man did not come into his text until he had been reduced to a schema, living in an abstract space from which all his physical and moral particularities, his social situation, and the facts of his life had been painstakingly excluded. . . .

Life, rightly considered the first requirement of any fictional hero, is just what Kafka elected to obliterate. Indeed, the lifelessness of Kafka's heroes, which stands in such sharp contract to the liveliness of his diaries and letters, is the most troubling quality of his longer fiction. For it is not events but the text that destroys Kafka's heroes, by abstracting and depersonalizing them, and that prevents the reader from feeling any common sympathy with their plight. The political and metaphysical forebodings undergone by Joseph K. are not nearly so frightening as our inability as readers to care deeply about what happens to this man from chapter to chapter. If in Kafka's shorter fiction this same chilling disinterest quickens the pulse, in the novels it repels and threatens to stupefy.

I suspect that the passion for Kafka's biography, on the part of Pawel and many another admirer, may represent a wish to reinvest him with all those "physical and moral particularities" that he so aggressively excluded from his work. It is a strange, if welcome, act of homage, one which seeks to rescue the writer from his art by filling in all the human connections of cause and effect, all the interpretations and explanations, even all the expression of tenderness, that he forbade himself. To write about Kafka's life is to repudiate, at least in some measure, his own depersonalization of the individual, to redeem the "Kafkaesque" world.

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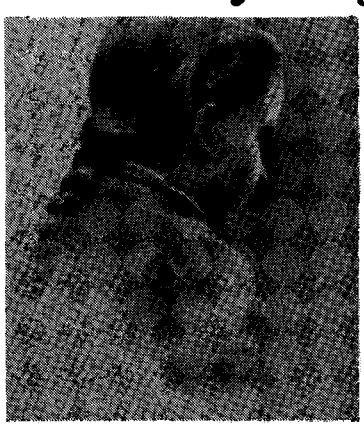

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Relief

THE QUALITY OF MERCY: CAMBODIA, HOLOCAUST, AND MODERN CONSCIENCE. By WILLIAM SHAWCROSS. *Simon & Schuster. 464 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by GUENTER LEWY

IN 1979 William Shawcross attracted widespread praise for his book, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia.* Some reviewers, it is true, pointed out the author's careless use of facts, or argued against the book's conclusion that the disasters which befell Cambodia in the 1970's were caused in the main by the policies of Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. The London *Economist* even called *Sideshow* propagandistic, misleading, and unfair. Yet despite such criticism most reviewers were enthusiastic about the book, which quickly became a best-seller, no doubt partly because it appealed to the post-Vietnam belief that America was the source of most if not all the evil in the world.

Five years later, Shawcross appears to have become a good bit wiser. His new book on Cambodia is fair and evenhanded—to the point where, as he told an interviewer in the New York *Times Book Review*, he expects it to be unpopular with the Left. Although Shawcross notes in passing that he stands by the conclusions of *Sideshow*, he makes no real attempt to link the arguments of the two books; he is therefore entitled to have his new book judged on its own merits.

The Quality of Mercy deals with the world's reaction to the plight of Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese, and especially with the performance of the humanitarian organizations which sought to alleviate the famine in that war-ravaged country in the years 1979-80. But the book opens with a description of the mass shooting of Jews by Nazi *Einsatzgruppen* in the Ukraine in the early 1940's, as witnessed by a German engineer, Hermann Graebe, and recited before the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal by the British Chief Prosecutor, Sir Hartley Shawcross, the author's father. The horrors of this scene left their mark on the son's political consciousness. Visiting Cambodia in 1980, he encountered sights that inevitably revived the memory of these deeds of mass murder.

The Vietnamese, who for years had backed the Khmer Rouge and until 1978 had denied the stories of incredible hardships and arbitrary killings told by escaping refugees, were now the new rulers of Cambodia, and were eagerly retailing and denouncing the atrocities committed by their former allies. Shawcross was shown excavated mass graves with the remains of the victims—hundreds of skulls, femurs, and limbs—carefully arranged in separate piles. He was taken to Tuol Sleng, the former Phnom Penh high school, which the Khmer Rouge had used as a prison and interrogation center and where some 16,000 inmates—men, women, and children—had been tortured and killed.

Shawcross was told that these crimes had been committed by Pol Pot on orders of "the false socialist leader of fascist China." In this way, the author writes, "the system that the Vietnamese and the Khmer Rouge shared, Marxist Leninism, could be exonerated—even while the *révanchisme* of Vietnam's old enemy, China, was excoriated."

In another attempt to obscure the fact that the Khmer Rouge was a Marxist-Leninist organization, the Vietnamese called the Tuol Sleng prison "an Asian Auschwitz." Yet Tuol Sleng, Shawcross notes, actually resembled a Stalinist prison, an "Asian Lubyanka," far more than it did a Nazi extermination camp. Before being killed, the prisoners of the Khmer Rouge, most of them disgraced cadres, had been forced to confess to monstrous and

GUENTER LEWY, *who teaches political science at the University of Massachusetts, is the author of* America in Vietnam, *among other books.*

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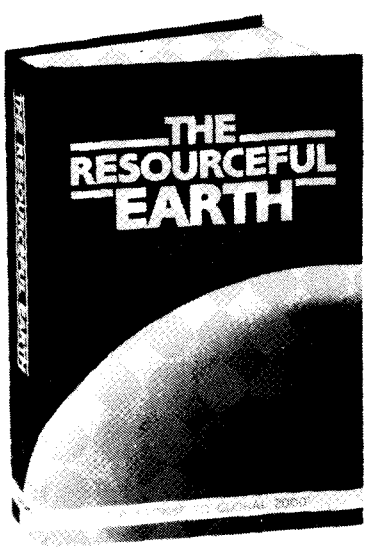

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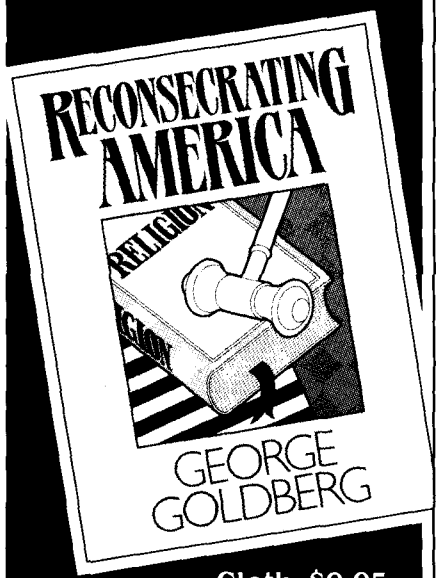

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absurd crimes, like having betrayed the revolution by working for the CIA or the Vietnamese. Thousands of files containing such "confessions" were captured by the Vietnamese when they took Phnom Penh in early 1979.

The Vietnamese had not been the only ones to deny Khmer Rouge terror. Shawcross recalls how in the mid-1970's most Western journalists also dismissed the reports of the refugees as unreliable. The CIA, many believed, was fabricating the notion of a bloodbath in Cambodia in order to justify, retroactively, the American role in Indochina. Many Western leftists took the same line. Noam Chomsky asserted that the accusation of genocide was part of a "vast and unprecedented" campaign against the Khmer Rouge. The Washington-based Indochina Resource Center, led by Gareth Porter and George Hildebrand, as late as May 1977 wrote to Shawcross inquiring whether he had any information on "CIA-operated radio stations designed to spread 'disinformation'—especially with regard to Cambodia."

A notable exception to these apologists for Khmer Rouge crimes was the French socialist intellectual, Jean Lacouture. Writing in March 1977, Lacouture gave an emotional endorsement to *Cambodge Anné Zéro* ("Cambodia Year Zero") by François Ponchaud, a French priest and long-time resident of Cambodia. Father Ponchaud's book was the first serious attempt to describe and analyze what was taking place in Cambodia; Lacouture wrote that it "can be read only with shame by those of us who supported the Khmer Rouge cause."

THE major portion of Shawcross's book is taken up by a description of the famine-relief effort. In early 1979, in the wake of the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, hundreds of thousands of people abandoned the cooperatives into which the Khmer Rouge had confined them and started out to search for missing relatives and former homes. There were well-grounded fears that no seed would be available to plant the next rice crop, and that the country would face a disastrous famine. The impression of an impending catastrophe was deepened by the appearance in February 1979 of several hundred thousand desperate Cambodians at the Thai border, pushed there by a renewed Vietnamese offensive in Western Cambodia. Journalists reported seeing spindly creatures stumbling out of the forests, with no flesh and with wide vacant eyes. The refugees had malaria, they had dysentery, they were so badly starved that their bodies were consuming themselves. For most of the observers, this dying mass of humanity was the most horrible sight they had ever seen.

The Vietnamese alternately admitted and denied the need for a relief program. Nevertheless, overcoming all hurdles thrown up by both the Thais and the new Vietnamese-dominated Cambodian government, an extensive program was formed and was able to get food and other humanitarian assistance to the Thai border area and into Cambodia proper. A crux of many of the difficulties encountered, Shawcross writes, was the determination of the Vietnamese to impose a Marxist-Leninist dictatorship upon the country; everything else was subordinated to this aim. This meant that while Western material was welcome, almost all Western advice and technical involvement were refused. Indoctrination was deemed more vital than training. Key personnel were sent away at short notice for reeducation, without regard for their current activities, including caring for the critically ill.

AS IT turned out, the feared large-scale catastrophe did not materialize. This was due not so much to the relief supplies, which for the most part went to the political cadres, soldiers, and employees of the Cambodian government, as to the fact that the broad masses of the people were able to survive on the fruit and fish which have always been available in Cambodia to supplement the basic diet of rice. Western observers had not realized, or had ignored, the importance of these secondary crops. Yet the fact that millions of Cambodians managed to survive without receiving

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large amounts of internationally donated food does not mean that the aid was unnecessary. It undoubtedly helped save thousands of vulnerable people, including children and the sick.

The United States comes out looking rather good from Shawcross's account. Fully one-third of all the money donated by the nations of the world for disaster relief in Cambodia was contributed by the United States. Moreover, the United States has taken in by far the largest number—611,000—of the over one million Indochinese who have fled their countries since 1975 and resettled abroad. The American ambassador to Thailand in these years of trial, Morton Abramowitz, is praised by Shawcross as an unusually able diplomat and a compassionate human being. While relief organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and Oxfam come in for considerable criticism on account of inefficiencies and bungling responses to the unfolding crisis, Abramowitz is credited with displaying extraordinary energy and with playing an essential role in the success of the relief effort.

In general, Shawcross stresses the difficulty of evaluating humanitarian-aid programs. Not only do the relevant agencies publish little about their work, but they themselves often conduct few internal assessments of results in terms of initial objectives. Perhaps the most important handicap under which such agencies labor is that they are frequently required to make procurement decisions quickly and on the basis of inadequate information.

This predicament, one might add, is one that relief agencies share with statesmen. Shawcross told the New York *Times Book Review* that criticizing humanitarian organizations "is a lot harder than criticizing Henry Kissinger. In this case, it was much more difficult to separate right from wrong." Perhaps, with his newly discovered appreciation of the difficulties involved in taking action on the basis of limited knowledge, he will in the future learn to be more cautious in judging statesmen as well.

Terrorism and Beyond

THE PLO: THE RISE AND FALL OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION. By JILLIAN BECKER. *St. Martin's Press. 303 pp. $19.95.*

Reviewed by DANIEL PIPES

On one level, Jillian Becker successfully achieves her aim in *The PLO*. The book provides a straightforward, factual survey of the PLO's remarkably extensive activities from its founding in January 1964 to late 1983. Miss Becker captures the organization's frenetic pace during those years: its involvement in inter-Arab politics, the challenges it directed to established Arab governments, its role in the founding of contemporary terrorism and as the linchpin of an international terrorist network, its close relations with the Soviet Union, the crises it provoked between the United States and Israel, its long period of control over southern Lebanon, its impact on politics in Israel. Miss Becker's accomplishment, and the power of her book, lie in this fast-paced, cogent, accurate, and full account of the PLO's far-ranging record.

On another level, however, the book strikes me as far less successful. Miss Becker clearly abhors the PLO, and her book is intended as a monument to its evil. Hers is not a scholarly treatise, aspiring to truth as an end in itself, but an intensely polemical work aimed at turning public opinion against the PLO. There is nothing wrong, to be sure, with polemical works, but they must be judged according to their impact. It is in this regard that Miss Becker's work does not succeed—in large part because she ig-

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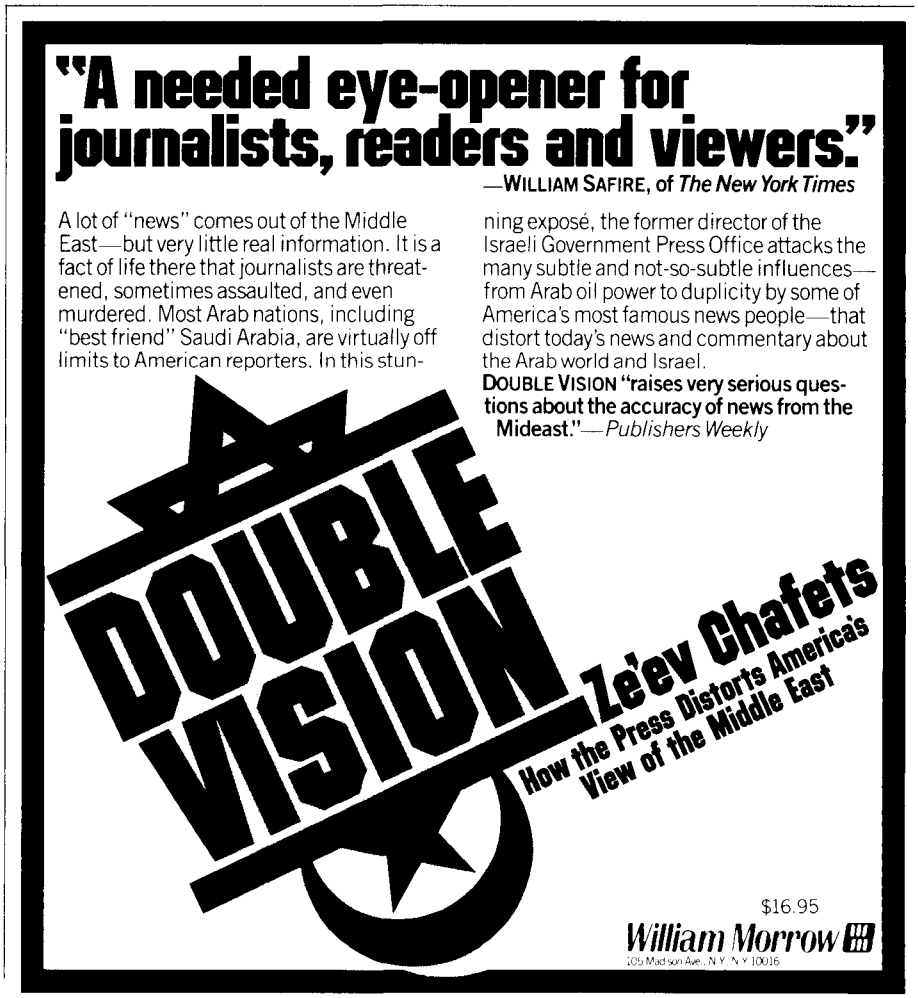
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nores the audience she should be addressing.

In my understanding, there are three bodies of opinion in Western Europe and the United States on the PLO. There are those who approve of the organization, the people who lead it, and the goals they aspire to. There are those who reject the PLO and all its works, as they reject all uses of terror and all movements aligned with the Soviet Union. And there are those whose views coincide with portions of both the pro-PLO and the anti-PLO arguments.

These people in the middle tend to condemn PLO tactics but consider the Palestinian issue one with which Israel (and therefore also the United States) must eventually deal. From their perspective, outrage at PLO deeds is compatible with concern that the Palestinian leadership (whether constituted as the PLO or as some other body) be brought into the political process. Adherents of the middle ground deplore past PLO acts but profess themselves open-minded to anything that might lead to a resolution of Palestinian grievances. Needless to say, those in the middle group claim to be the only realists.

Both the pro- and anti-PLO factions, unless they are content to preach to the converted or send out forlorn appeals to the adversary, must consider the middle their target audience, and must tailor their arguments to meet its concerns, in particular the notion that the Palestinian issue lies at the heart of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The pro-PLO faction seems to understand this. It does not waste its breath, for instance, on explaining or justifying PLO behavior, which is beyond redemption in the eyes of the middle. Helena Cobban in *The Palestine Liberation Organization* mentions terror by al-Fatah just once in a 305-page book—and then only to note that the adoption of terror was probably a minority decision within the Fatah leadership. Instead, pro-PLO writers concentrate on two themes: the nature of internal PLO politics (which they find, in the memorable words of Edward Said in *The Question of Palestine*, "more or less improvisatory, in some cases even family-style"), for this legitimizes the organization as a normal political institution; and the need to accommodate the PLO in any solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. In making the latter point, they emphasize the importance of the PLO and the absolute inevitability of dealing with it. Whatever one's feelings about the PLO, they imply, the organization must be contended with.

It would seem logical that anti-PLO writers should similarly concentrate on this point, and respond to it by arguing that the PLO is *not* the key to the Middle East conflict, and that the Arabs and Israel can achieve peace without its blessing. One might expect them to emphasize the fact that it is the Arab states, and especially Syria, which keep the conflict alive, and to show that the PLO exercises a negligible influence over the policies of these Arab states. Finally, one would expect them to point out that Arab leaders are themselves far from unanimous on the question of a PLO state, and that many of them have a vision of Palestine that conflicts with that of the PLO.

Pertinent as this line of argument may be, it is rarely made. Instead, anti-PLO writers—and Miss Becker is a prime example—give in to the temptation to discredit the PLO by cataloguing its outrages. This is a necessary task, but not a sufficient one if the purpose is to influence the middle group which already acknowledges the barbarity of PLO behavior but regards constant reminders of it as a diversion from the really important topic of the future of the Palestinian people.

Miss Becker's analysis raises another problematic issue. That she spent years of her life learning about the details of the PLO, that she has made it the subject of a full-length book, and that she hopes to focus public attention on it means that she is willy-nilly helping to publicize it and hence to

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Love and Exile

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raise its stature. This is, of course, the very antithesis of her intention. But such publicity does lend credence to the PLO claim that it is a major actor in the Middle East. Deprived of this attention, the PLO would undoubtedly lose influence over Arab-Israeli relations.

I do not mean to deny the usefulness of a critical overview of PLO activities, or the need for reminders of its record as a terrorist organization. But this does not override my sense that Miss Becker's efforts have missed their target, and may even be counterproductive to her purpose.

A Radical Reactionary

HILAIRE BELLOC. By A.N. WILSON. *Atheneum. 398 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD PEARCE

IN HIS day, Hilaire Belloc was treated as a peer by Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells, with whom he conducted a furious public controversy. A Member of Parliament from 1906 to 1910, he was a novelist, historian, creditable minor poet, Roman Catholic polemicist—and incandescent anti-Semite. All that remains of him in print today is his nonsense verse, which is superb. The pity of Belloc is that he was an intelligent man in the grip of something nasty. A.N. Wilson's biography describes a man who, unable to rest, wrote 150 books and the lines:

> . . . I hope it may be said,
> His sins were scarlet but his
> books were read.

In their day, at least, they were. *The Path to Rome, Marie Antoinette, The Cruise of the Nona,* all had a vogue. And Belloc was immensely important to other Catholic writers at a time when that church was becoming intellectually fashionable in England, very much on the pattern (as George Orwell pointed out) which was to recur with pro-Soviet chic in the 1930's. In that decade the choice spirits were joining the party; in the 1920's they were being received into the Church. Belloc, immensely obtuse (in a highly educated way) about most issues, was exceedingly shrewd about the marketing of his Church: "Four powers govern man: avarice, lust, fear, and snobbishness. One can use the latter . . . we can spread the mood that we are the bosses and the chic and that whoever does not accept the Faith writes himself down as suburban. Upon these amiable lines do I proceed."

A more ungodly promotion of religion cannot quickly be imagined, but as a Machiavellian device it could hardly be bettered. As Wilson remarks, "Within two generations of Belloc's death the English-speaking world was wallow-

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EDWARD PEARCE, *here making his first appearance in* COMMENTARY, *is an editorial writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the London* Daily Telegraph. *He is the author of* The Senate of Lilliput.

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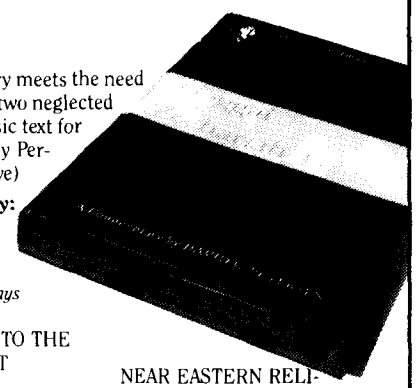

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ing in *Brideshead Revisited*," a monument in appropriately bad taste to Hilaire Belloc put up by a disciple, Evelyn Waugh, who shared similar prejudices.

Belloc was influential because of that touch of tactical shrewdness. His influence was exercised on behalf of the propositions that capitalism was innately evil but could not be replaced by socialism; that capitalism was a product of two comparable evils, the Jews and Protestantism; that there existed at all times an understanding, just this side of conspiracy, among the English, the Germans, and the Jews, which operated internationally across the lines of Bolshevism and merchant finance; that the Balfour Declaration was a blasphemy; and that true civilization was only to be found in the Latin world, whose epicenter was France —Catholic, anti-Dreyfus, wine-drinking, and culturally superior.

On the Jews Belloc was astonishing even by the low standards of his day. Sailing to New York he wrote:

> Talking of Yids the swarm of Yids on board this sparsely populated craft is extraordinary: there are hardly 100 people on board and at least 81 are incredible: monsters of the deep. . . . [N]ow Americans are vocally and loudly and simply and in child-like fashion Jew-haters. So I live in hopes of an explosion before we reach the beatitudes of New York. Wouldn't it be amusing if this next outburst of blind rage against the poor old Jews were to blow up in New York. . . . If or when the New Yorkites rise against the Jews there will be a pogrom; for the Americans yield to none in their promiscuous violence and blood-letting.

In the context of the Spanish Civil War Belloc spoke of "the Divine Right of Moses Rosenberg . . . to order the revolution in Spain, forbid the Mass under pain and torture, and prevent little children being taught their prayers." In verse he wrote:

> Here Rothschild lives, chief of the tribe abhorred
> Who tried to put to death
> Our Blessed Lord
> But on the third day, as the Gospel shows
> Cheating their machinations, He arose
> In Whose commemoration now and then,
> We persecute these curly-headed men.

Primly and ill-advisedly, Wilson attempts a damage-limitation exercise. He quotes a passage from Belloc's book, *The Jews*, in which Belloc acknowledged the presence of mania and obsession in the anti-Semite: "His prejudices soon lose proportion altogether. He comes to see the Jew in everything and everywhere. . . ." But that was Belloc's own exercise in damage-limitation! And the damage he did to his own reputation by the lunatic observations quoted above was terminal. Wilson, whose mannered and fey style of writing does nothing to improve his case, lets Belloc down more gently than a modern Roman Catholic biographer would. While contemporary Catholics (like the novelist David Lodge) regard Belloc and his school with derisive embarrassment, a high Anglican like A.N. Wilson speaks, in the fellow-traveler's language, of deplorable excesses.

Still, on the whole, Wilson has put Belloc the fanatic before us competently, and has intelligently looked at the roots of his opinions and prejudices. The crucial point is that Belloc was, in fact, the most minimal Christian. To the poet Edward Shanks, he described Jesus as "a milksop." "I revere him because I am instructed to do so by the Church but personally I find him repellent." As for St. Paul, he was simply "a muddleheaded old Yid." Clearly, it was not Christian spirituality, and still less Christian charity, which motivated the man. He saw his church as a culture, a political steel corset which would hold the world together.

Belloc was, in the most measured and least emotive sense of the word, a fascist. He had served in the British Parliament, and his contempt for parliamentary democracy was absolute. He had learned his politics from a jumble of sources, some more reputable than others. Cardinal Manning of Westminster, a friend of Belloc's mother, had passed on to him the notion of asking the then-neglected question of social division in England, to which he had only a theological answer. William Cobbett was another influence, a genuine champion of poor people in the hardest of times but also a searcher after a lost Gothic world of contented peasants. As those peasants had never existed, Cobbett, and Belloc after him, could blame the Reformation, finance capital, and the Jews for having destroyed them.

A final influence came from France, through the writings of Charles Maurras, more candid with himself than Belloc in that he was an unbeliever who perceived the political utility of the Catholic Church in its triumphalist condition. Maurras and his movement, the *Action Française*, believed in a European civilization superior to and exclusive of the meretricious shams of middle-class capitalism. Knowing democracy to be a fraud invented by bankers and Jews, Maurras wanted authoritarian institutions and a Strong Man to lead them.

Belloc dissented from none of this. Indeed, he believed that the England he half-despised could be saved only by association with this superior culture, through which it could connect with the tradition of the Roman empire. To the Catholic, as Belloc perceived him, "the Europeans are of his flesh. He can converse with the 1st century or the 15th, shrines are not odd to him nor oracles; and if he is the supplanter, he is also the heir of the gods." This sort of transcendental rubbish, which contains debased elements of romanticism and the Gothic revival, brought Belloc at last to the monarch he had been seeking, the reviver of Latin civilization, the new Roman, Benito Mussolini. "Meeting this man after talking to the parliamentarians in other countries was like a meeting with some athletic friend of one's boyhood after an afternoon with racing touts."

This was not a judgment which Belloc ever felt much reason to revise. But it would be a serious mistake to regard him as a mere

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reactionary. He had always thought of himself as a radical, a man of the Left. And not without justice, for he admired the French Revolution and especially Danton, partly because they were French and partly because they were violent. He could be as vituperative about the rich and the capitalist system as any Marxist (though he had a sycophantic tenderness for those whose money was old enough and who had a bit of class). But his leftism was anti-democratic. Belloc wanted a true monarch, hugely despising the "Prussian" ones in Buckingham Palace whom he anyway believed to be partly Jewish (through Prince Albert). He found what he sought in Mussolini. The author of *The Path to Rome* was in total moral accord with the man, himself once an ardent leftist, who effected the March on Rome.

BELLOC was quite right to stress his continental inheritance. Orwell again, very sharply, detected a touch of the Quisling in Belloc's love of elsewhere and condescension to his own country, whose corrupt democracy has, however, never elected an open fascist to the House of Commons. One must sometimes remind oneself that democracy has relatively shallow roots on the continent of Europe, and not least in France with its history of elective semi-dictatorship, two monarchies, two empires, and five republics.

The affectionate contempt which Belloc had for England turned into something quite curdled when he spoke of the U.S. The passage about Moses Rosenberg quoted above contains other, fascinating sentences:

> There's no doubt about our being able to wangle the Americans to helping us again if need be or even saving us. We teach them all. . . . But there is this danger about our control by the poor old Yanks, that it's like being dependent upon an idiot innocent giant child. They will do their best for us but that best may be mortally dangerous.

For once, Belloc sounds highly contemporary. Where have we heard these sentiments lately, if more gently expressed? Wherever West European politicians, conscious of their long civilization and the half-wittedness of their transatlantic allies, gather to smile at B-movie cowboy Presidents and the crazies in the Pentagon before asking for some small useful favor. Belloc, the voice of Pétainist France and Mussolini's Italy (he was saved from Hitler-worship by his robotic hatred of "the Prussians"), reminds us that the civilization of continental Europe is yet a frail thing.

Urban Idealism

CITIES AND THE WEALTH OF NATIONS. By JANE JACOBS. *Random House. 257 pp. $17.95.*

Reviewed by JAMES RING ADAMS

JANE JACOBS, the well-known author of *The Death and Life of Great American Cities,* migrated from New York in the late 60's when her quest for a humane scale of life took her to Toronto, Canada. From this exile, her romantic view of the livable city has continued to strike echoes across the American political spectrum. Her new book, an ambitious attack on economics, is a selection of the Conservative Book Club and has also won raves from such representative leftists as Richard J. Barnet of the Institute for Policy Studies, who reviewed it in the New York *Times.*

Miss Jacobs's popularity no doubt derives in part from the variety of sacred cows she attacks. The Left finds something to applaud in her dismissal of the nation-state, the Right in her debunking of transfer payments, whether in the form of foreign aid or of welfare. As this suggests, Miss Jacobs is a bit helter-skelter in her approach; her book swims in pop pseudo-economics, extreme overgeneralization, and arguments that at first glance seem simply silly. Yet she has a remarkable knack for hitting raw nerves, and even her daffiest strokes show a native insight that the reader must respect.

Miss Jacobs begins by dismissing all modern schools of economics, from Marx to supply-side, because of their alleged fixation on the nation-state as the unit of analysis. This charge might astonish both Marxists and anyone who remembers that the first supply-side theses of Arthur Laffer and Robert Mundell were formulated in work on the global economy. But Miss Jacobs is less concerned with the niceties of economic theory than with downgrading the nation and upgrading the city.

A healthy city, she argues, goes through "dynamic," "explosive" cycles of "import-replacing." That is, as its economy grows in sophistication, it learns to make for itself the wonderful things it previously bought from more advanced cities. With the resources freed by these innovations, the vigorous city can afford new and ever more sophisticated imports, which inspire a whole new round of replacements. By contrast, declining cities or non-city regions rely on exports of natural resources or old inventions and show no drive to diversify.

This import-replacing unleashes five great forces that shape a city's economic region, for good or ill, and Miss Jacobs ticks them off in the chapters that form the core of her book. The city provides markets for the hinterland's produce or resources, which is a good thing if the relation between them is not overly colonial. The city offers jobs that lure the rural population, which is sometimes a bad thing. It transplants its own industries into the outback—sometimes a good thing and sometimes a bad. It develops technologies that can have the bad result of devastating rural economic relations. And it generates capital, which it can reinvest in more import-replacing within its region (good) or send as transfer payments to other, stagnant regions (bad).

When Miss Jacobs sets this analytical apparatus in motion, the whirring and clanking can be impressive. Thus, she gives a memorable account of the futility of foreign aid or of TVA-style regional-development programs. But too often her examples and

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her analysis head in separate directions. Notwithstanding her impatience with the nation-state, for example, she dwells at surprising length on the economy of Uruguay. After telling us sensibly enough that cities are more natural economic units than nations, she shifts her focus from city to region to networks of trade-related cities to the economic relations that tie together broad regions and even span oceans. There is not much here in the way of precise definition or economic modeling, let alone of statistical evidence.

STILL, Miss Jacobs more than compensates for these lacks by her remarkable intuition. What she is really doing is reintroducing the question of the natural political unit, a classic question that ironically now preoccupies the Left. Radicals devoted to local action have written a great deal about the inhuman scale of the large nation, the virtues of the neighborhood, and the quest for an intimate polity. Some, like Kirkpatrick Sale, have rediscovered the ancient Greek *polis* and the original meaning of federalism.

Unfortunately, classical practice was contradictory. The great city-states like Athens may have had a small, politically active population of around 20,000, so that every citizen had some personal knowledge of the reputation of all the others. But the city also controlled a large rural hinterland, with substantial agricultural and mineral resources. And—a point many commentators miss—its citizenry made up only a small fraction of its total inhabitants. Montesquieu calculated that, counting slaves and alien residents, Athens had an economic population of more than a million.

The implications of the classical examples, then, are not of the sort that modern commentators would wish to follow to their end. Miss Jacobs also fails to pursue another crucial question. She writes at length about waxing cities and waning cities, but her explanations of their growth and decay rarely go beyond a description of symptoms. Still, her instinct provides the raw material for an answer, which is one to satisfy not the Left but the Right.

Both military spending and welfare, she writes, are "transactions of decline" because they drain earnings from the city economy. To sustain these expenses,

> a nation's or empire's cities must unremittingly surrender earned imports, or rather their equivalents in value. This naturally makes cities poorer customers for one another than they otherwise would be. It also inescapably makes them feebler or more dilatory at replacing imports from one another, or from anywhere else. . . .

To recast the argument in Republican terms, decline follows on excessive diversion of the economy into sterile government spending.

MISS JACOBS here comes close to denouncing that bane of the supply-sider, excessively high taxation. Even more strikingly, her description of the "import-replacing process" resembles Jean-Baptiste Say's "law of markets," namely, that the act of production engenders the wherewithal to generate demand for the new products. Say's law, a restatement of Adam Smith's analysis of the division of labor, is the basis of the modern supply-side movement.

But Miss Jacobs recoils from embracing this doctrine. She pairs a searching attack on "demand-side" Keynesians with a ritual denunciation of the supply-siders. Except for the brief passage just quoted, she ignores the economic forces that cause urban decay. In doing so, ironically, she disregards her first-hand experience. For she left New York City just as its soaring tax burden had initiated a crisis that ultimately drove out 700,000 residents and 600,000 jobs.

If Miss Jacobs had followed through on this train of thought, she would have secured her place in the supply-side pantheon. It is, in any event, one which this group seems willing to grant her, even while her standing with the Left remains intact. What all this suggests is that neither group has quite figured out where, within its particular framework, to place the issues she raises.

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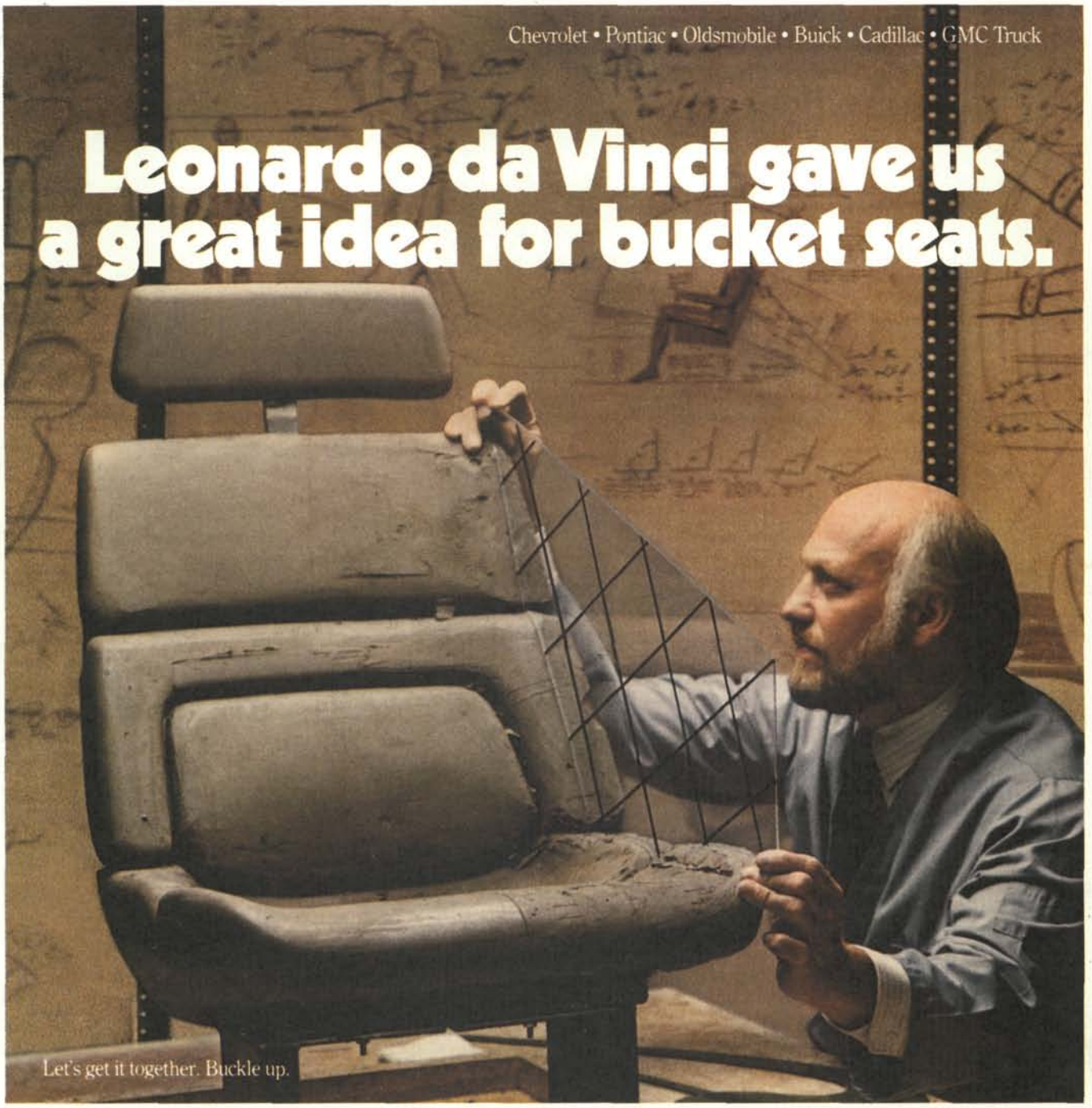

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